

THROUGH EUROPE
AND THE BALKANS

OTHER WORKS BY LIEUT.-COLONEL ETHERTON :

ACROSS THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

IN THE HEART OF ASIA

CHINA—THE FACTS

ADVENTURES IN FIVE CONTINENTS

THE PACIFIC—A FORECAST



A MILE ABOVE CATTARO

Photo • Authors

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

THE RECORD OF A MOTOR TOUR

by

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AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

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PREFACE

THE Arabs have a proverb that travel is conquest, in which there is a wealth of meaning ; for travel brings us into contact with other races, other manners, and new ideas. It reveals how the other half lives.

Travel by motor car, or cycle, affords the opportunity of ranging the wide spaces and penetrating the by-ways of Europe ; and whether in the high Alps, untamed Macedonia or romantic Italy—where time rolls back as in a book—or along the lovely Dalmatian coast, through Transylvania's lone valleys and Bohemian forests, a welcome and kindly interest are shown the stranger within the gates.

In the following pages we have recorded impressions gathered along 6,300 miles in many lands, and revealed something of the joy of the open road with the many fascinating experiences encountered by the way. We have endeavoured to show that motoring, no longer an expensive pastime, brings the Continent within reach of those with a good car, the right philosophy, and a desire to see what lies beyond the horizon.

Our cordial thanks are due to the Embassies and Legations, ministers and officials of the countries we traversed for the assistance afforded us, as well as to many new friends for pleasant hours in their company.

LONDON,
June, 1928.

It is a great life if you don't weaken.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ACROSS HOLLAND	I
II. THE NEW GERMANY	20
III. IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND OLD BOHEMIA	42
IV. POLAND—THE NEW ORDER	61
V. ROMANTIC ROMANIA	86
VI. THE HOME OF THE BULGARS	116
VII. IN GREEK MACEDONIA	144
VIII. ALBANIA—SOUTH TO NORTH	170
IX. DALMATIA, AND THE LAND OF THE SERBS	200
X. ACROSS EUROPE TO THE CHANNEL	234
XI. TOURING EUROPE AND THE BALKANS	262
XII. APPENDIX	280
INDEX	293

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A Mile above Cattaro	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A Family Group in the Land of Dykes	<i>Facing Page</i> 6
Swinging Ashore at the Hook	
Through the Stately Avenues of Holland	16
The Old and the New	
A Backwater of Old Hanover	24
Mediaeval Brunswick	
We Desert the Road	34
Towards the Bohemian Frontier of Germany	
The Crown of Prague is the Hradčany	44
West—A Bohemian Stronghold	50
East—A Road that Winds to the Tatras	
The Open Door	56
The Wishing Well	
A Czechoslovakian Shepherd	
Seen in Slovakia	
Peasant Art has Survived in Lowicz	64
Hucules of a Lonesome Carpathian Valley	
The Jew and His Carry-All	72
Harvesters of South Poland	
A Polish Inn and its Patrons	80
The Village Laundry	
Road-Menders are Much in Evidence in the New Poland	
Through the Wonderland of The Carpathians	88
A Little Village Belle	96
Types by the Way	
Lads of the Village	
The Sheep Follow His Piping	
A Romanian Village is a Sight on Sundays	102
The Carpathian Mountaineers were Delighted with our Car	
A Gypsy Queen	110
A Romany Wedding in Romania	

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

	<i>Facing Page</i>
Up from the Danube into Bulgaria	118
Mosquitoes Shared our Camp Beneath the Stars	
The Gypsy Audience	128
A Bulgarian Village Orchestra	
The Husband Rides	
South Bulgarian Cottagers : The Women are Constant Spinners	138
The Bakery of a Bulgarian Village	
Early Morning in the Rupel Defile	146
The Struma. Here Goats and Mosquitoes Flourish	
By a Water-Hole we Found Encamped Greeks from Asia Minor	154
A Macedonian Bridge that Kept the Home Fires Burning	
The Shadows Lengthened as we Left Lake Ostrovo	164
A Tight Corner above Lake Okhrida	
Scutari	172
A Merchant of Kortcha	
A Mountain Lad	
Distaff	
In the Haunts of Wild Men	180
Primitive Albanian Transport	
An Age-Old Turkish Bridge in North Albania : The Scene of Many Fights	188
Would it Bear our Weight ?	
Up to Any Mischief	196
Beau Brummels of the Hills	
The Young Albanian Fighter	
The Hero of Many Fights in Montenegro	206
Bosnian, and Proud of It	
Lovchen—The Descent from Montenegro to Cattaro	
Dawn in Montenegro	214
Nomads of the Balkans	
Trousered Terpsichore	224
On With the Dance	
A Hungarian Link with Oxford	236
Pride of Hungary	
Hungarian Spinners	
An Austrian Castle in the Air—Hochosterwitz	242
The Autostrada	250
The Devil Built Him a Bridge on the Gothard Road	
Harmantswillerkopft—They Died for France	256

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

CHAPTER I

ACROSS HOLLAND

PACKING is the art of doing without. As experienced travellers who had encircled the globe more than once, we prepared for a two months' journey in different climates and under varying conditions by leaving out most things that solicitous friends assured us that we would need. Then each of us left out what he thought the other would not need; and when we contemplated the result, we decided that whatever happened, from volcanic eruptions to glacier slides, we would be suitably dressed for the occasion.

We had costumes for mountain climbing, and desert riding, for camping out and for paying afternoon calls. We were prepared for dog bites, mosquito bites, snake bites, and bites with rulers of States. We had a luncheon basket and a thermos flask, cameras, torches, ropes, chains, spare gadgets, maps, guide-books, first-aid outfit, field-glasses, fountain-pens, ordinary plain pens, ink, much paper, and several kinds of patent lighters. About the only thing we did not have was a wireless set. Yes, packing is the art of doing without!

Our chief solicitude was, of course, to be sure that the car was in good fettle and tuned to a hair. It does not do to leave this to chance—or to risk finding out when a thousand miles from home that some essential has been neglected. The actual taking of a car abroad is, however, a simple matter. A little filling up of forms, a brief examination of the car—and that is all.

From deck-chairs on the boat at Harwich we saw the

20/60 Vauxhall swung aloft, delicately lowered, and firmly secured. It was as easy as hanging up one's hat and coat. We sailed into the dawn—the golden glory of July's last day, and thereafter we revelled in sunshine that used to come to England in the summer time.

And then we met the little Cockney motor-cyclist. We met him on the boat and he told us he was exploring Europe for the first time. His knowledge of languages was limited to an indifferent acquaintance with English as it is spoken in the backblocks of London, and his entire luggage was strapped at the back of his machine. Here we realized was the true spirit of adventure. Here was a youngster, he was not more than twenty-one, venturing into the unknown, eager to meet strange people and see strange places, to have thrilling adventures and maybe, face sudden dangers, equipped only with a Cockney accent and enough luggage to last from Saturday to Monday. He was of the real pioneer breed. We looked at him, we looked at our bulging kit bags, and we looked at each other and blushed. We consoled ourselves with the thought that we could jettison some of our carefully packed luggage when we reached the rough roads. And we did!

The first glimpse of the Hook of Holland is not impressive. This flat land, won from the sea with so much skill and patience, does not at first glance convey the romance that lies behind the dykes, the romance of a stubborn people fighting and beating the greedy ocean. Sullenly the sea has given up, to make fair pastures and fruitful gardens. Out of the waters the dogged Hollander has pumped prosperity.

Leaving the car with the A.A. agent, who also took charge of our papers, we stepped into Holland and faced examination by the Dutch Customs authorities, who are politely expeditious. Heard for the first time, the Dutch language sounds something between lowland Scotch and a cold in the head. The Dutch—it is said—have only one swear word, so they do most of their quarrelling in English. But they are a very placid, peaceful people, and are so busy keeping the sea in its

WINDMILLS AND SUN-BONNETS

place that they rarely resort to the use of forcible English. When the Dutch snatch an unusually large slice of land from the sea they celebrate it by awarding themselves a medal.

Holland is composed mainly of salvaged land and windmills. Some of these windmills are very old. So are the men who keep the mill in the family, son following father from generation to generation. These keepers rarely move from the shadow of the whirling sails. They are a self-contained community, and some families have little need of money, trading by barter, giving cabbages for clogs as it were.

As one half of Holland is below sea level, windmills are set up like sentries to pump the water into ditches leading to sluice gates, thence to the sea which for ever seeks to send the water back again. There are tiny toy-like mills also, watchers in the wind, put into gear by wooden floats in the ditch. As the water rises it lifts the float and when the pressure of water threatens to engulf the adjacent lands, the windmill is automatically set working, and its frantic spinning sends the anxious people to their pumps.

Next to windmills the most entertaining feature of a Dutch landscape is a Dutch cow. In Holland cows sometimes wear straw hats or sun-bonnets, and it is diverting to see one cow approach another as if asking the old-familiar question, "Is my hat on straight, dear?" Also the motorist will occasionally see one cow being snubbed, if not actually cut, by the herd. She is obviously wearing one of last year's fashions.

We passed crowds of little children as we left the Hook. They were being marshalled in column of route by parents and teachers. Nobody could be so solemn as a Dutch child looks. They are solemn because they are so clean, and their cleanliness on a ceremonious occasion is unnatural. These children were bound for a gritty picnic among the sand-dunes, which no doubt had been washed and sifted for the occasion.

Cleanliness is Holland's national vice. We had not travelled a kilometre before we saw an old housewife with brush and

bucket washing the trunk of the spreading family tree growing in her trim garden patch. Why? Possibly oude Jan leans his back against it, and she was thinking of his best coat, or it may be she just washed the tree as she washed the cobble stones—for the sheer joy of washing. We did not know. We only marvelled.

Holland of the musical comedy and the picture post-cards really exists—but only in parts. The captivating Dutch costume can be seen, especially on Sundays and in Zeeland. Bobbed hair, baggy trousers, tight jackets that stop too soon, and wooden shoes are the correct wear for the men, and the girls remain faithful to a dozen or so petticoats, and a head-dress that resembles a gilded galleon in full sail. The head-dress of the Zeeland girl varies according to district and religion, but generally it consists of a wide, flared hood of white-starched linen, cunningly set off by large gold ornaments of square or corkscrew pattern fixed in the hair above the temples. No outsider has been able to discover the secret of how a Zeeland girl gets into her bodice, the short sleeves of which are so tight that they restrict the circulation, causing the arms to look red-raw. Both the men and the women are very solemn, but they are not so solemn as the little children—the boys concealed in man-size pants and the girls each wearing skirts long enough to provide frocks for half a dozen English flappers.

Dutch children are rarely if ever beaten—and they look as though they did not need to be. If a stranger smacked the head of a rude boy, there might be an indignation meeting. We don't know at what age a Dutch boy begins smoking, because we did not see any in their cradles, but by the time he is eight, the Dutch boy enjoys his cigar. It would be a pretty sight to see a Dutch grandfather stooping so that his little grandson could get a light from his cigar. The Dutch cigar is cheap, mild and good. Dutch dogs are not.

Dogs, bicycles and canal boats are the chief means of transport in Holland. The Dutch dog spends most of his life under a cart

DUTCH DOGS

hating other dogs. The Dutch dog does not like motor cars because they have no dogs under them, and it is for ever seeking to remedy the deficiency. If the motorist is not careful he will have quite a lot of dogs, complete with carts or barrows, under his car. When the average Dutch dog sees a car coming he will announce the fact to another dog attached to a cart across the way. Then when the car is almost upon them they play at "Last Across." If the brakes hold, well and good. If they don't, the motorist discovers that he has damaged the earning capacity of the best and most expensive dogs in the country.

Nobody ill-treats a Dutch dog. It is not that kind of dog. They all seem to belong to a sort of canine Trade Union, and they appear always on the verge of striking for larger bones and shorter working hours. We had an experience with a Dutch working dog which had decided to discuss something on the agenda with a dog across the way, just as we turned the corner. The next minute was exciting. Sometimes we were in the picture, sometimes it was one of the dogs, and sometimes both dogs. We yelled warnings at the dogs, the dogs barked insults at us, and the crowd shouted epithets at the dogs and us impartially. Fortunately the brakes held and the dog-power of the locality remained undiminished.

Historically, Holland has close association with Britain. Not only did she give us a warlike king, but on the sea she gave us a lot of trouble. Walcheren, where the quaint and picturesque costumes come from, was the scene of a British military disaster in 1809, when our army was destroyed by ineptitude, fever and ague. The Commander-in-Chief, the Earl of Chatham, brother of the famous Pitt, who had died four years previously, was a champion of delay of whom it was said :

"Great Chatham with his sabre drawn
Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan.
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham."

After the motorist has been a couple of hours in Holland, he will have come to the alarming but wrong conclusion that the Dutch do not take the roads seriously. To them a road is nothing more than a pathway along the side of the canal. There are good surfaces, of course, because almost everybody in Holland rides a bicycle, but the visiting motorist quickly discovers that the Dutch think in canals. But what a country to motor through! It is a dreamland filled with sleeping villages so much alike that one always seems to be in the same place. Restfulness, peace, content; these things are the charm of Holland, whose quiet beauty acts as a sedative on tired minds.

Eventide brings the message of the bells, for Holland is famous for its carillons. These bells are worked either by a wheel in the shape of a revolving cask, or by a skilled musician striking the notes on a keyboard. Motoring through quaint villages and mediæval towns, one hears over land and water, the sweet music of Dutch folk-songs, wafted from the belfries. The art of the bell-player or carillon canon in the Low Countries is an honourable profession directed by strict and ancient rules.

A few miles from the Hook brought us into touch with another piece of old English history in the little town of Delft, where lies buried the Dutch Nelson of his period—Admiral Van Tromp, who won more than a score of naval victories over us, and who, tradition says, tied a broom to the foremast of his ship as a sign that he had swept the English from the seas. Like many famous men, Tromp had an extraordinary career; his father was a sailor and together they crossed the tempestuous seas in a frail cockle-shell barque down to the Gulf of Guinea on the West African coast, where they passed into the calm and tropic waters of a new world. There they were captured by an English warship and young Tromp was pressed into the service as a cabin boy. Later he escaped, and, entering the Dutch navy, eventually rose to become Holland's greatest seaman. He was killed in the battle



Photo . The Motor

A FAMILY GROUP IN THE LAND OF DYKES



Photo . Authors

SWINGING ASHORE AT THE HOOK

with us off the island of Texel, at the entrance to the Zuider Zee, in 1653. He won, but lost his life.

We would warn visiting motorists that the Oude Kerk spire at the end of the main street really does lean. It looks as if it were about to crash into the street, but it is as firm as the leaning tower of Pisa.

In the Oude Kerk, where Tromp lies buried, is also the tomb of Piet Hein, who has gone down to posterity as a hero who could achieve things, for, amongst his other exploits, he captured a Spanish treasure ship with more than twelve million silver florins. The Nieuwe Kerk is four hundred years old, and it is here that we may regard the resting place of William the Silent—the Saviour of Holland.

Within the Singel and among the canals intersecting Delft, we discovered a leafy avenue, and in it a place inviting us to coffee and a cigarette. The atmosphere of the old town is one of peace, and the soft morning air with the sun glinting through the trees convinced us that now our holiday really had started. We began to enjoy Holland.

After this pleasant break at Delft, we made for the Hague, six miles along a well-laid brick road shaded by trees. The way led through Ryswyk, where history was made when England, France, Germany, Holland, and Spain signed a treaty in 1697. Times change with the circling years and now Ryswyk is one with the Hague, the approach to which lies through industrial suburbs. This is not the Holland of one's dreams. There is no suggestion of Rembrandt, Van Dyck, or Rubens, and only when within the city does its beauty become apparent, but its charm is not due to this alone. The pictures adorning its galleries, the Binnenhof and Mauritshuis, are notable, and the latter houses the finest works of the old masters, of which perhaps the best example is Rembrandt's realistic "School of Anatomy."

There are many buildings and halls in the Hague, filled with romance. Then there is the Windsor Park of the city in the woodlands of the Bosch (the Queen's favourite

walk), a piece of typically English landscape where oak and beech, mingled with specimens of Dutch forestry, have been left in their natural setting, instead of being trimmed and pruned and made to appear in straight lines, as so beloved of the Dutch. This habit of subordinating the trees to a mathematical formula and training them in rigid lines, squares and oblongs, is perhaps only natural for a people who have for centuries bent nature to their will.

We devoted an hour or more to wandering through the Bosch woodlands ; even in the strong light of noon the trees take on fascinating tints, shadows fill the avenues and sidewalks, and it is possible, under this romantic influence, to conjure to life old Dutch paintings where, in hunting scenes, hounds and huntsmen careered through its leafy stretches, and made the place gay with their costumes and the call of the hunting horn. We did not see the Bosch at its best—by moonlight, when instead of the rush of the modern motor car and the hoarse squawk of the Klaxon, there is abiding peace in keeping with its picturesque past.

Every visitor to the Hague goes to the Palace of Peace, erected through the generosity of the late Andrew Carnegie. The first International Peace Conference was convened at the Hague on the initiative of the late Tsar Nicholas II in 1899, for the amicable settlement of disputes ; a place where the representatives of all nations could meet in solemn conclave, and decide amongst themselves how the world should be remodelled and elevated to a higher and nobler level than it had known before. Once they had assembled and opened the discussion on numerous explosive topics, it became evident that although their principles might coincide in theory, their respective interests were difficult of adjustment. By the irony of fate, the Tsar, who desired to go down to posterity as the modern apostle of peace, was the first to break the pact he originated. The nations of the world had gathered together to do him honour in the Huis ten Bosch—prior to the construction of the Palace—the allegories of famous painters, depicting victory,

RESOLUTIONS AND ULTIMATUMS

war and desolation looking down upon the delegates who had come to explore and to further the pacific scheme of the Russian Emperor. Coming as it did from the Slav Colossus, the movement attracted world-wide attention, because Russia had always been the terror of statesmen, and a form of nightmare to ourselves, especially in India. Russia had imposed upon the world by the menace of her size and seeming strength; and the steady advance of her influence across Europe and Asia was like the move of destiny, whilst the failure of the great Napoleon to exert the least influence upon her people or her territory had created a lasting impression that dominated the policy of neighbouring States and all those who came in contact with her.

Four years after this memorable meeting—to shatter beatific visions—there came the Russo-Japanese war. Nevertheless, a further Peace Conference was held in 1907, at a time when the Powers were arming with redoubled energy, profiting by the lessons of the Russo-Japanese war, which offered such a fruitful field for studying how best man might destroy his kind. Then came the Great War, with far-reaching changes in its wake. The Tsar is no more; empires have disappeared off the map; new states have been created, and the drastic modifications carried into effect have profoundly altered the political and strategical situation throughout the world.

It is easy to declare that the Palace of Peace is a mockery and a gilded sham; to point from the Palace to the Great War and to ask, cynically, what good is there in talking peace when men's hearts are hard; when science and invention are being prostituted to make of men's bodies a greater holocaust than ever before. But let us try to see in the Palace, and in its successor, Geneva, the only glimmer of hope that the nations will, in time, if not in ours, settle their differences by passing resolutions rather than by sending ultimatums.

From the Hague we went out through the Haagsche Bosch and in half an hour were in the winding streets of Leyden. The curve of the latter as they follow the Old Rhine shows

the buildings off to advantage. In the Breestraat is the Town Hall, dating from the sixteenth century, and approached by steps branching in the style that is Dutch.

Had it been springtime we would have side-stepped along the twenty-five miles that separate Haarlem from Leyden and adventured among the riot of tulips and hyacinths whereby this erstwhile desert blossoms as does the rose, which also is grown hereabouts. A profitable business—this, and one which draws a great press of visitors, making pilgrimage to the goddess Flora, as well as of experts come to trade, not only in roses, but also in bulbs. Rare bulbs fetch big prices, but to the ordinary person, they resemble the common onion. A friend of one of the writers once brought home a bag of the precious sort, and his wife, busy just then with the work of pickling shallots, used them for bottling.

When the hyacinths and tulips are in bloom, the bulb fields make a glorious picture of crimson lakes, purple pools, golden islands and captured rainbows. And the car glides through the perfumed air of flowerland.

To the motorist seeking his exit from Leyden, the most welcome sight are the direction signs of the Dutch Touring Club—or A.N.W.B., to give it the initials of its national title. The achievements of this club in motor development are exemplary. It has marked the ways so effectively that, with one of its official maps, on which the location of each sign is indicated, one cannot go astray. A name once mentioned on a signpost is continued on others successively, until the place is reached ; there being continuity of direction. Never were there such amazing maps. They even proclaim the material—whether brick, pavé or macadam—constituting the road surface, and prove the simplicity of touring in Holland, despite its zigzag routes.

Our way led eastward along the Rhine, passing, so we were told, near the mill that was Rembrandt's birthplace. Although Holland is chiefly a flat artificiality, and intersected by canals, flanked by countless windmills that pump

unceasingly against the tide of inundation, yet it has created those master painters, the Dutch school. The scenery is diverse in its picturesqueness—and some of the world's greatest masters of the brush have found their fame in Holland. In the soft light and elusive atmosphere pervading this land, enhancing the beauty and repose of restful scenes, one discovers whence originates the charm with which their pictures are endowed.

But all Holland is not an embanked plain. Later we renewed acquaintance with the pine-clad hills around Arnhem, which extend by the rolling heath and woods of Oisterwijk, Laren, and a hundred other localities, where there are many bold prospects. We were charmed with the spreading forests of great trees, magnificent country seats and parklands with delightful vistas, which follow after the dyked Holland country has been left behind.

We found journeying in Holland to be a sequence of avenues and elevated roads from which the country is seen in wide perspective, and without the interruption of those vexing hedges and walls that often, in England, restrict the view to the span of the highway.

Everywhere the countryside is neat toward Utrecht—the peasants attractive. There seem to be no slovens and little poverty; the houses spotless, the gardens without weeds. Much that one sees is strikingly novel; inland towns with harbours, the old brick churches in perfect repair, Rijnwielpad—that is, the special tracks for cyclists, the dog-drawn cartlets, the tree-shaded roads, wall-less gardens, silent pools, intense cultivation, and a host of quaint characteristics.

We entered old Utrecht as a beautiful carillon “sang” the passing hour, reminding us of the homely tunes played by the bells of St. Mary's, Warwick. Utrecht is an ancient city of old Holland, the foundation dating from Roman times. The eye is held by the great stepped tower of St. Martin's, separated from the chancel for ever when the entire nave—

it seems—was blown down in a memorable storm of the eighteenth century. But why the church authorities should encase the congregation, which meets in the chancel, in a dreadful looking wooden box, passes the wit of anyone with the smallest love for beautiful buildings.

Although we had a long row to hoe, ploughing the length and breadth of Europe, we could not hurry as one does in France or England. We dallied without excuse but with good reason. Going easily we travelled in the spirit of leisureliness that previous experience of Holland had shown to be essential to full enjoyment.

To see the classical costumes for which Holland is famous one must go to the fringe of the country. They are no longer modish elsewhere, but plentiful and characteristic in Zeeland, South Beveland, North Holland, Volendam, Marken, Edam, and on the North-East horn of the Zuider Zee—at Stavoren, and up in Friesland or at Staphorst, seventy kilometres north of Zutphen. At the same time the visitor will be delighted with the peasantry chaffering on a market day in any country town. They are Dutch enough.

Soon we approached the Zuider Zee, the smallest and most interesting of all the European seas. It was unknown eight hundred years ago. When the Romans occupied Holland before the Christian era, it was a dense forest, the haunt of big game, and connected with the North Sea by a river. As the waters gradually encroached upon the adjacent country the forest became in part marshland, until the entire tract was submerged. Then successive storms from the North Sea caused inundations, and for over twelve hundred years, subsequent to the Roman period, the Dutch had an average of one inundation every eight years. No sea in the world can compare with the Zuider for the energy and constructive ability it has brought into being, and the constant change in sea and land which have necessitated the Dutch fighting the persistent and implacable enemy. Their other foes, English, French, Spanish, Roman, were transient; in

A DESPERATE FIGHT

the fulness of time they passed on, but the sea remained, and has stormed by degrees this fertile area.

The glamour of adventure and romance hangs over the Zuider Zee; it is full of quaint traditions of cities beneath its waters. In Elizabethan days, French and English fleets strove alternately for mastery in these waters, and endeavoured to pilot their sailing craft through the sunken wrecks and other obstacles by which the Dutch sought to render the passage impracticable.

The most famous of these fights was that with the Spanish fleet in 1573, which curiously enough was commanded by a Dutchman, the Count de Bossu. The Dutch were bonny fighters. Even the women and children had assisted the men at the attacks on Alkmaar, and when the hostile fleet came into the waters of the Zuider Zee, the Dutch at once bore down upon them. A long and desperate fight ensued, until the Spanish leader was compelled to surrender ignominiously the following day.

It is not surprising, then, that the shores of the Zuider Zee are full of interest for the student and the artist, especially the latter, who is catered for by the Dutch in appropriate ways. There are quaint inns, where it is the custom of the painter to leave a specimen of his work, with the result that some of them are small treasure-houses in art, and full of the colour and atmosphere of this old-world setting.

But apparently the days of the Zuider Zee are numbered, for it is proposed to drain and reclaim it for cultivation. The plan involves the construction of immense dams, together with sluices to carry off the waters from the six rivers running into the sea. When the work is completed, and it is estimated it will take thirty years, there will be more than half a million acres available for additional cultivation, but the cost may reach £50,000,000. The Dutch anticipate that the economic results will justify the expenditure, but in any case it will deprive the artist and tourist of much of the charm now attaching to this part of Holland.

Utrecht, for all it holds of beautiful ecclesiastical architecture, and of exceptional things to cause the student to dally, made—for us—a less insistent call than did the dinner waiting sixty-two and a half kilometres away. The unfed motorist lacks appreciation of all things, except perhaps a good road and swiftly passing scenery. Out to the east from Utrecht, one achieves both desiderata. What can excel the Maliebaan—the triple avenue of lime trees—which launches one towards Arnhem, on a fine road with substantial houses. At twenty kilometres there is Doorn and we stopped here out of curiosity to see the ex-Kaiser William II of Germany taking the air and saluting the locals, under the peremptory guidance of his masterful wife. Apparently, however, he was fulfilling his destiny of chopping wood, for unfortunately he was not in sight, and so we passed on amidst streams of cyclists making home in the mid-day hour.

The motor-tourist will acclaim the Rijwielpad, or cycle paths, but let him judge of an experience we had—and beware. Though we were not permitted to trespass upon the Rijwielpad, cyclists may travel where they please. We encountered two—ahead and abreast—travelling in our direction. We were making up for lost time, and, hooting peremptorily, drove on, keeping, of course, to the right side of the road, in the belief that both cyclists, would move to the cycle-path on the left. The pair, however, divided, one went across our bows to the cycle-path, the other moved from the centre of the road to the right of the brick paving. We had not expected this and it took a remarkably quick and exact twist of the wheel to make room for him, and to steer for the narrow space between him and his friend on the cycle-path to our left. The sensation of driving between the clouds of cyclists one meets on the narrow Dutch roads, and never being sure to which side they will elect to go—or whether they will not change their minds at the last moment, is one to which the tourist, in time, gets accustomed, but which, at first, is not pleasant. At the same time he should regard the Dutch cyclist with the respect due

to a fellow road-taxpayer. Out of a population of about seven and a half millions, there are nearly four million cyclists, and as each pays about five shillings per annum tax, there is a goodly sum for making the Rijwielpad. Similar amenities might be provided for cyclists in Britain if they paid a like contribution towards the upkeep of the highway.

After cyclists, potholes—potholes in brick—will engage a little of the attention which the motorist can ill-spare from the scenery. The shock of dropping into a brick-lined pothole has no like. Happily the operation of mending a brick road is simple and the Dutch are industrious, as they would need to be to keep pace with the increasing damage by lorry traffic. Once we encountered repairs in progress and the road closed, with the bricks stacked on the verge. The accommodating roadmen, however, placed rows of bricks to form a causeway for the wheels and we were soon across. Successive visits to Holland, since the war, show the steady improvement in the roads, despite the difficulty with which the country is faced owing to there being little or no road stone to be found locally. This has to be imported from Belgium at such great cost that the famous Dutch vitrified brick still retains its supremacy for highway paving on the score of relative cheapness.

From Utrecht, the road has proceeded through country gradually becoming more wooded, and with Arnhem we leave the Holland country. Those who think the Netherlands a dull place, will change their minds if they follow this itinerary. So thorough has been the afforestation and roadside planting, that the drive is amidst beautiful avenues of up-standing timber interspersed with mansions. The meadows and kine seen from a stance among the trees make a lovely picture.

Past experience in finding the way to the Pays Bas Hotel, avoided the risk we otherwise would have run of losing ourselves in the intricacies of the narrow streets of the old part of Arnhem. Crossing the square we came under the shadow of the Groote Kerk with its tower rising 319 feet, and pulled up at the familiar backwater into which the hotel projects. The Pays

Bas is an ancient house, but mine host will show you with pride the model hygienic bedroom, awarded the international prize of the Touring Club de France. Then you may join us at food in a cool room, with flagons of iced beer as reward after the heat of the day. Coffee and tobacco follow under the big cherry tree, and tinkling chimes from the bells in the big tower. An episode like this remains undulled by later crowding events. The mind recurs to it and one vows to live it over again some other day.

A first visit to Arnhem on the Rhine, and to the extensive pine forests behind the town, is a surprise. It confounds the flat Holland theory, which fades in face of the hills in the neighbourhood. These are only hills but, as all things go by comparison, they are, in their relative position, quite imposing.

Dutchmen, back from a life in the colonies, retire to Arnhem. They build fine houses and enjoy their slippered ease in an atmosphere of peace and comfort in this clean town. They make excursions to the woods and, of an evening, seated among the sociable throng in Sobsbeck Park smoke reflectively and listen, as we did, to good music—and so to bed, convinced that life in Arnhem is pleasant.

The Dutch breakfast is a happy compromise between the British feast of food and the *petit déjeuner* of Europe. The Dutch, in their wisdom, offer for the first meal of the day an enticing array of ham, cheeses, sausages and cold meats cut in flakes as thin as a leaf. They provide also plentiful bread and butter and coffee. Breakfast is like unto *hors-d'œuvre* and one may make either a meal of it, browsing from this dish to that, or peck daintily—as the appetite dictates. And the coffee is really good.

A road lined by the biggest trees in Holland leads to Zutphen. Here we found one of the most fascinating of Dutch towns with a quaint old library where the volumes are fastened to their desks by chains, and the atmosphere of the place took us back to mediæval times—with the great hall supported on



Photo Authors

THROUGH THE STATELY AVENUES OF HOLLAND



Photo Authors

THE OLD AND THE NEW

ZUTPHEN

columns and lit by exquisite windows at the side. They point out, on the tiled flooring of the library, the cloven hoof of the devil who made his imprint there when bringing food to a fasting monk. The latter was unable to resist the tempting dish put before him and so the Satanic footprint remains as a warning to those who come after and feel the grip of temptation fastening on them.

Like so many of the Dutch towns, Zutphen has had its siege and days of loot and plunder. They did things thoroughly in the bad old times, like Moghul conquerors of India who laid everything low, from trees and towns, to men, women and children. There was Philip II of Spain, whom Mary of England married but afterwards left, who had, as his lieutenant in the Low Countries, the Duke of Alva, a truculent person where war and the enemy were concerned. This worthy instructed his son, who was in charge of operations at the attack on Zutphen in 1572, that not a man must be left alive. The son was worthy of his sire, for in the subsequent massacre the behest was well and truly observed, the man-power of the city being exterminated by various methods peculiar to the times; several hundreds of soldiers and citizens were fastened back to back and cast into the river.

For us, Zutphen will always have special interest from its association with Sir Philip Sidney in 1586, when English troops were fighting in Holland under the command of my lord of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth. Sir Philip was wounded in the fight under the walls of Zutphen and when, dying, he was offered a drink of water, asked that it might be given to a wounded soldier lying near, saying that he needed it more than himself.

Beyond Zutphen the way leads just north of Borculo which, in recent years, was "strafed"—to use the real Dutch word—by the worst typhoon the country had ever experienced. One of us had been on the road in the neighbourhood when it occurred. He related how, without warning, black darkness descended, the heavens opened, hailstones the size of

pigeons' eggs rained down, playing a devil's tattoo on the bonnet. Thunder crashed, trees bent, twisted, snapped. The car rocked and seemed as if it must capsize. The noise was terrifying. Later he visited Borculo, saw the town in ruins such as artillery wrought in weeks in France. Brick buildings had been levelled to their foundations and whole woods cut down as with a scythe. The troops, rushed in to render succour, emphasized the picture as one of military devastation.

A run of seventy kilometres brought us to the Dutch frontier, and the lasting impression we took away with us was a country where everything has been put and then painted. The shutters to the windows, the doors, barges, and woodwork generally are often in brilliant colours. The bricks bright red; the trees and grass fresh green. Even the cattle are not so dun-coloured as in Britain, and everywhere there are well-stocked flower gardens. The Dutch have a genius for colour and keep alive the tradition handed down by the great masters of the brush.

The absence of industrialism, though not of industry, leaves a pervading air of calm that others, besides the artist, can catch—a something that throws into striking perspective the well-grouped scene, seems even to emphasize the sunset and leads the mind away from the habit of concentration bred in cities. Perhaps the calculated pauses for refreshment aid the effect.

Expenses in Holland are much on the same level as in England, and the food very good, though no cheaper than at an equivalent English hotel. If it be remembered that the Dutch evening meal is a long and ample affair, then money may be saved by taking a light and inexpensive lunch; which ought to suffice, since, as already stated, the Dutch breakfast is more satisfying than the usual *petit déjeuner*.

One's first venture in Holland conveys the impression that prices are high. Money seems to melt. This, it is soon discovered, is due to a lack of appreciation of the significance

A SQUARE DEAL

of the guilder (florin). One is inclined to think of a guilder as a shilling and to use it as freely. Actually it is one and eightpence. Look after the guilder and the cents will look after themselves.

The ungracious old rhyme—born doubtless of an age when maritime rivalry sanctioned any libel against a foe—that “A fault of the Dutch is giving too little and asking too much,” was demonstrably untrue in our experience on this and previous occasions. We received good measure for what we paid, and never paid above the market price. The hotels quote a price and adhere to it. The bill is presented by the head waiter to whom one makes payment including ten per cent for service. There are no miscellaneous and vexing tips, no row of expectant domestics to disappoint, no rage in anyone’s heart. The parting guest is sped by obviously genuine expressions of goodwill.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW GERMANY

THE drowsing frontier woke to life with our arrival; yawned, and, sitting up, took notice. A little bird, whispering to Berlin, must have got the message through that the German Embassy in London prayed the Civil Power to expedite our passage, to assist us in any difficulty and afford all information; because that exactly describes our transit into New Germany. Before even the broad-beamed Dutchman, sitting at the receipt of custom by his gate, had completed his study of our Belasting Kaart, had stamped it, detached the *volet* from the *carnet* and found Holland on our crowded passports, a stir was noticeable at the Zollamt, across the ten yards space that serves as no-man's-land by Germany's threshold. Smart German guards came out from shady corners and formed themselves into a reception committee. The *laisser-passer* confirmed their anticipation. *Here indeed was the long-looked for party from England.* Oh! Yes. The frontier stirred!

No need to expose the still-untouched luncheon basket, or to increase the troubles in the old kit-bags by opening them to the rummaging fingers of inquisitive Customs sleuths.

"The Herren expected are. Will the Herren into the office kommen?" at least, that is what it sounded like, and so we accepted the invitation. Here the business with our papers was transacted with feverish speed. Officials perspired. The Steuerkarte—motor-tax card—was prepared. We paid

A NARROW ESCAPE

out a few marks, rubber stamps banged, and the procession moved off to group itself around the car for a photograph.

The previous summer, at a frontier of Spain, the act of snapshotting the guard had nearly landed us against a wall before a file of Aguizilas with orders to "snapshot" us with their rifles. We had committed the great offence. But Mañana, and our inability to explain the unexplainable, saved that situation.

A mile beyond the frontier post lies Gronder, whose only significance for us was beer, cool and long. But this was one of the well-laid plans that gang agley. Across the main highway stretched a sign writ large :—"Umleitung," which is to say "the road is closed, go round, please." Such occasions as these allow the innocent abroad to test his sense of direction. He makes one mistake in what he thinks passes for German ; misunderstood, he receives polite but misleading gesticulation, and carries on—on the wrong route. Not that this matters, unless time be a big factor in the equation, for there is always more of interest to be found off, than on, the main road.

Germany entered, the change in scene is striking. Where had been such essentials as go to form the Dutch landscape, now appeared something quite different. The double rows of trees along the road gave place to single lines. The cycle-paths disappeared. The dogs were a different shape. The cows had changed colour. The gardens and homes lacked the copybook orderliness of those a mile back in Holland, but people smiled more easily. Some change in the land tenure or in the economic laws, caused fields of corn to grow in Germany, where next door the Dutchman's land was carrying fat stock. Is all this variation the result of a wire fence, or the cause of it ?

"It would be interesting" said the one who was driving, "to discuss these differences with a Dutchman, from back there at Enschede, and with a local German"—and at that and by a lightning turn of the wheel, he just missed landing his

German, who was aloft harvesting apples from a wayside tree, the ladder projecting well out into the roadway.

The fruit trees bordering the highways of Germany are evidence both of the economical method of the peasants, as well as of the local honesty. Not that it is easy to steal from trees which, though municipal property, are usually leased for cropping to approved persons. These keep a sharp look out and woe betide the thief. By the time they have finished with him he positively hates fruit.

In England, those who rule the roads have set their faces against planting the verges with fruit-bearing trees. Such, they say, would get into bad condition, and infect the neighbouring orchards. This is not so convincing an argument contra, as is the evidence of Germany an argument pro. Instead of theorizing upon it, the idea might at least be given a fair trial in a particular district, and only rejected if proved a failure. A few years since, the greybeards declared that concrete was not suitable for road surfacing, but the experiments made by pioneer highway engineers have demonstrated the error of dogma. Is there a highway authority in England who will approach the question of making the "long acre" into a flowering orchard, and perhaps feeding the indigent on the crops, to their own gain and with advantage to the rates we pay?

These thoughts came to us as we lay, stretched beneath the bough, in the shimmering heat of afternoon. Around were great cornfields. Harvesting was in full swing; peasants were working amidst the whirl of machinery and the rumble of laden carts stringing along the road. When the evening shadows fell the countryside was still alive with toilers. No eight- or even ten-hour day here.

Ashamed of our idleness we arose and went our way, disturbing the peaceful scene with outrageous noises from the electric horn: there is no other way to obtain a passage through the slow-moving harvest traffic. Often we would brake from sixty miles an hour to two, and, hooting our

loudest, wait for minutes in a haze of dust until the string of carts made way. The usual type of English horn is insufficiently raucous, or penetrating, in its note for the continental carter, who has been brought up to expect something with a "kick" in it. When he hears the polite English hooter—as sometimes happens—he thinks, perhaps, that there must be a cricket on the hay he carries. He would not dream that any motorist could be responsible for so pleasant a sound.

One loses much time through these checks and must force the pace between-whiles, taking the scenery in quick review.

Speeding between the wide level fields we reflected that here is a new land that has sprung up since the world war, where a race, destined again to be great and to count in the comity of nations, is passing through the transitional stage from economic ruin and defeat to complete reorganization of all the impulses and force that go to the making of dominant states. The re-orientation of Germany is one of the most interesting processes of our time. "Trouble makes the man." It seems to be remaking Germany.

First impressions received on entering the new Germany are the concentrated energy and determination of the people to build up, from the ruins of an empire, a nation greater and more powerful than that which has passed. Here is the natural desire to retrieve lost ground, power and prestige, on the part of a people who, whatever we may think of them and their conduct in the war, are hardworking and industrious, imbued with the faculty of science, of industrialism and mechanical improvement, and possessing an amazing aptitude for hard work where the interest and welfare of their country are concerned.

It was Count B. of the German Embassy who had counselled us to branch from the direct route and make for Münster, where we stayed the night at the Furstenhof, in which a fine room, with bath, costs five shillings. Dinner was laid in a quaint old restaurant. It was a picturesque place, with fine

panelled walls, and good food, and cheerful company made an altogether memorable feast. The waiter spoke English, learnt at the Savoy in London, and converse with him led to acquaintance with a citizen seated at the next table behind an immense mug of beer. Talk turned to the war, then to currency and so to present-day problems. Without going deeply into the past he recalled, what he claimed, was the Allies' error in not imposing terms upon beaten Germany that could have been met, and in failing to curb the feeling against her. "I concede" he said "that after the flood of propaganda loosed during a modern war, this was not easy. Your task of reconciling conflicting interests was superhuman, especially in the face of the rival opinions of what penalties could be inflicted upon your defeated enemy." Certainly the settlement of these burning questions, at a time when memories were livid with the agony in which Europe lay, was a task transcending any previously faced by statesmen. "Don't you think," he added reflectively, "it was a pity that, contrary to the precedent of previous wars, the beaten foes were not asked to share in the negotiations and express their views as to the terms with which they could, or could not, comply? This failure to admit us to a hearing in the deliberations gave rise to many subsequent objections which, in fact, necessitated modification in the terms, whilst it also led to a sense of rankling injustice that has steadily gained ground." On this controversial point we held our peace.

Apart from the difficulties of effecting a financial settlement, the war brought out new political problems, the most vital being connected with the rise of peoples and states, awakened to a new political consciousness, sprung from the spirit of self-determination.

It is beyond our purpose and scope to discuss the wisdom of creating the numerous states which came into being as the result of the Treaty of Versailles, the free ports in erstwhile German territory, and the carving up of Teutonic countries.



Photo A D A C

A BACKWATER OF OLD HANOVER

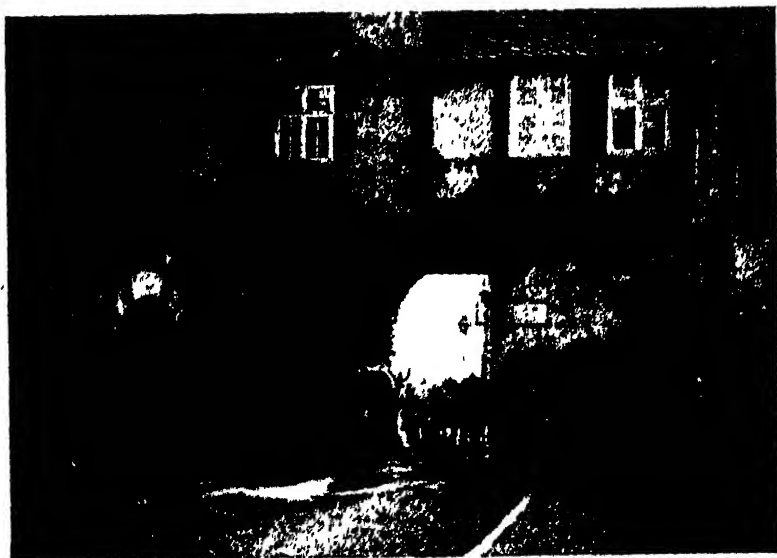


Photo A D A C

MEDIAEVAL BRUNSWICK

STABILITY AFTER DEFEAT

Naturally, the Germans hold strong views about these things, regarding them as attempts to suppress them and to bring them to the status of a minor power. They declare that Europe has been "Balkanized"—that, in depriving Germany of her power, Europe has been left in a state of flux.

Be that as it may, it would appear that a stable Germany is more essential to the welfare of Western Europe than a weak one, and, in view of the menace from Soviet Russia, Germany may well be the bulwark that will shelter the nations, with their order and stability, fending off the anarchy and chaos prevailing within the Russian borders—the end of which no man can truly prophesy.

Meanwhile, the Germans are silently working out their destiny and with the skill and subtlety that characterized the German plan of action after the defeat inflicted upon them by Napoleon at Jena in 1806—when, as the Emperor thought, their ability and scope to create a new army had been effectively curtailed. They are circumventing the orders and restrictions, and, in accepting the principles of reconstruction with all that arises from it, are, by the exercise of time, labour and patience, preparing for the test ahead.

* * * *

The next morning, in brilliant sunshine, having done our duty by the fine churches and old buildings in Münster, we filled up with forty litres of petrol (costing twelve shillings and eightpence) and took the road for Bielefeld and Hanover, through a land of cornfields, forests, and meadow where the peasants toil from early dawn till dewy eve. The roads were excellent and frequently we opened out to over sixty miles an hour, pausing anon at way-side inns, the *gasthäuser* of Germany, where the food is good and accommodation simple but clean. It is amongst these hostelries and with the people of the countryside, that one comes in contact with the geniality of the German character, which, when appraised at its true value, goes far to supplement, from an economic aspect, the vein of quiet energy and

ceaseless purpose that has enabled the Germans to attain their position in the commercial world.

The Germans do not concentrate all their energy on work. They save some for the beer. Germany's reputation as the land par excellence of beer and beer drinkers is well-earned. As the national beverage, beer is treated in a practical way. The German regards it as an article of sustenance and, being therefore ranked with food, it is taxed accordingly, and not, as with us, regarded in the light of a luxury. The Germans are at one upon the beer question, and some years ago, when it was proposed to class drunkenness as a penal offence, a committee of eminent jurists declared, after due discussion, that such a course was impossible and totally at variance with national sentiment and feeling on this important question. It is a pity that some other nations do not substitute the light lager beer for the fiery spirit which is their national beverage. Beer is really a temperance drink when judged by comparisons.

The drawback of Hanover is that one does not want to hurry away from it. It repays the traveller who decides to halt here. This is where Hindenburg went into retirement after he had led the army back. Here he exchanged the sword for the tankard, and, until called in his old age to the Presidency, lived quietly, reflecting on his life spent in the Tannenberg marshes, where for years he had rehearsed the battles which he had foreseen with Russia; which, in the fullness of time, he fought and won according to plan.

Hanover is a noble city, and since 1866 the capital of the Prussian province of this name, boasting 300,000 inhabitants, possessing a library of 170,000 volumes, fine picture galleries, a zoo, museums above the ordinary, and beautiful old houses.

The German and Dutch museum spirit is not a thing easily acquired by the Englishman. Our home town may boast a museum. We, ourselves, neither visit it nor boast about it, though we commend it to our visiting friends. "You

should see our museum," we say encouragingly. "Pop in there after lunch—you'll like it." Sometimes they have the indiscretion to ask us have we, ourselves, seen it; and the answer is usually an evasive negative. To the German, however, a holiday visit to a town implies an early call at the collections on view. He revels in the arts and crafts of the ages, and nature under glass, all catalogued. It is almost a vice. One can imagine that when Hans is late home from the office, Gretchen shakes her finger at him. "I know what *you've* been up to! You've been at that museum again," and he hangs his head, shamefacedly, with no answer or excuse to offer.

The German's delight in art galleries and museums is a symptom of an ordered mind, and his capacity for collecting facts is amazing. There is a story that once a prize was offered among the nations for the best essay on the elephant. The Englishman went to Central Africa and after a sojourn wrote on the subject of "The Elephant and how to shoot it." The American visited Wall Street and then wrote about "The Commercial Value of the Elephant." The Frenchman went to the Zoo and prepared a thesis on "The Elephant and his loves." The Pole wrote about "The Elephant and the Polish question." The German published a whole book entitled "Facts and figures about the Elephant," with an appendix concerning its use in field warfare!

Apropos museums, the Dutch have even extended the idea, so that at Arnhem they have established a wonderful "Open-Air" collection. Here we saw, gathered in a beautiful woodland setting, actual examples of Dutch buildings, moved and re-erected as a national register of peasant architecture, old and new; crofter huts from the Frisian Isles, ancient mills from the Holland province, delightful farmhouses and cabins.

* * * *

The chief charm of Hanover is its being a centre for drives and excursions. We stayed long enough to absorb a little of its atmosphere, but this was really incidental to the major purpose—the replenishment of the luncheon basket. One of

us had said, as we packed the car in London, "the basket is full," and the other had groaned—remembering the countless kilometres that self-same basket had travelled unopened from north to south of France, through Spain and along the Pyrenees the summer before—groaned, and hoped for the best. "We'll buy some rolls at the Hook—and have a glorious break for a couple of hours over an alfresco meal under a Dutch tree."—Humph.

It was only when thoughts arose of the German customs searching the luggage at the frontier that we had remembered our larder and its mouldering contents. "Never mind" quoth the alfrescoist, "I'll have it replenished and—you'll see——." That's why we saw so much of Hanover. The hotelier made himself responsible for changing stale food for fresh, and later we sped eastward along a fast road through a veritable tunnel of trees, carrying ample provision for the promised feast. Unfortunately the delay caused our arrival at Brunswick to coincide with the lunch hour—and Brunswick is interesting, the day was hot, the lounge of the hotel cool. Some time later we went on our way. The luncheon basket—badly bunkered—lost the hole again. "Well, the food will keep for to-morrow." But that to-morrow never came. Instead, a week hence, a small Czech took the stale rolls and meat we proffered, took them suspiciously, smiled wanly—and pattered off with his dog and an idea that would save our feelings.

* * * *

The charm of the old city of Brunswick lies partly in its rows of half-timbered houses—propping each other up by their gables for support, but, withal, a wonderful, well-preserved relic of an age when life was more picturesque than we make it to-day. The city also has much distinctive architecture and relics of past splendour—with a pleasant situation on the branching river, which encircles the Old Town as a moat.

Our further progress confirmed the impression that on the whole, the German roads are above reproach; only once

THE FLIGHT FROM THE MARK

en route to Berlin did we lose our way, due to the road being up—"gesperrt"—and to the want of a sign indicating the loopway the traveller would take to regain the highway farther on. Uncertain as to our course, none being available to guide us, we took a small lane to our left; it led us on by many devious turns, along narrow tracks, and past quaint farmhouses, until finally we were brought to a standstill in a cornfield, where sturdy Brandenburg peasants came to our aid and piloted us out a mile or more on to the highway, the road to Berlin.

Of Magdeburg our recollection is confined to the novel plan of dedicating a portion of the footway for use as a cycle-path. There are many cyclists in this busy commercial city and both they and the motorists benefit by this arrangement. The Elbe is crossed on leaving the city; soon a long straight road is entered and the speedometer needle mounts rapidly. The way leads monotonously between open fields carrying a rich golden harvest, and thronged with toiling farm-hands. It was 8 p.m. and there, by Brandenburg, was the sight of a road-gang still busily engaged on tarring operations and repairing the surface. Verily, Germany is wasting no time in improving the roads—even though this is more in anticipation of a motor traffic to come, than to serve the present. Very few motors are encountered, perhaps due to the financial losses of the middle classes when the mark sank to nothingness in 1923, to be replaced by the present reichsmark.

The writers were in the Rhine district during the "flight from the mark." The first day the pound rose to 20,000,000 marks and a fortnight later the exchange was 1050,000,000. At Wiesbaden we stayed with a friend, a retired judge of the German courts, who had lost all his savings. His pension did not suffice to buy even a sheet of brown paper. "The working man, the wage-earner, and the capitalists are all right," he declared bitterly, "but we pensionnaires and others of our class have nothing left and no prospect of earning."

Another friend at Coblenz was an aged *fräulein*. We

sought her out and found her living in an attic without a fireplace. "I had a bank account in which I had accumulated enough to secure a decent burial, but it has vanished." This was her only thought—the horror of a pauper's grave. At a restaurant we took coffee and cakes, for which the charge was 70,000,000 marks—or one shilling and fourpence.

Just as the revolution of the mark—and its re-valuation—have delayed the development of democratic motoring, as known in England and America, even so have they interrupted the tourist traffic. Our tour of the Rhine had been far from cheap; necessity forced us to spend the marks even recklessly. Otherwise they spent themselves, by depreciation, overnight and gave no return. When the reichsmark was introduced, commodity and hotel prices were stabilized at so high a level that the tourist was frozen out. "Germany—the dearest place in Europe" travellers said, on their return.

Now all is changed. Germany is not noticeably dearer for the motorist than other countries. You must be as careful of the mark as of the shilling in England, and then all goes well. The bill presented by the hotel accords with the quoted prices. "Extras" are satisfactorily few—and tipping is on a basis which, though varying widely, is definitely fixed in advance by the hotels. What is more important, it is adhered to. The hotels, moreover, are spotlessly clean, with no lack of those having hot and cold water in all bedrooms, and rooms with bathrooms attached.

* * * *

But let us return to our present tournée—and tell of what befell at Potsdam. We had a good car, a swift and silent car. But it was new, and that explains why, when the engine quietly petered out, we said "Petrol"; said it with pained surprise because we had estimated the consumption mileage ratio and knew that on this basis we had ample to carry us into Berlin. Also the gauge showed two gallons, but a test with a dip-stick disagreed. The tank clearly was dry—or so we thought, not knowing about the baffle plate against which

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accidentally the stick had stopped short. What matter? We were in Potsdam. It might be late but if we acted quickly we would locate a garage somewhere near. And so while one went for petrol, the other stood guard, the centre of an interested crowd. Presently the seeker returned. Not a garage to be found open or openable. And so together, a further examination of the car—when the true cause, an electric wire adrift, was at once apparent!

Which goes to prove that careful diagnosis, at once, is best; that things are not always as they seem.

It was now nearly 10 p.m., and in the darkness we fozzled our approach to Berlin; missed the turning for the Autostrasse and got into a maze from which we emerged with loss of time and temper. And so, at last, to the Hotel Adlon, reputed the finest in Europe, and, by us—arriving tired, dusty and hungry—it well merits this praise. One of the pleasantest of many recollections is that of the efforts of its genial Director-General to see us comfortably installed, and of the efficient service he controls.

Before even we could remove the stains of travel, visitors began to call; and the hour was 11 p.m.! One came to say that Messrs. Daimler-Benz would send a car and driver next morning and “please, it is entirely at your disposal”—so that ours could receive the attention it might require. Another presented a letter of welcome and an invitation by the A.C. Von Deutschland to a luncheon. Then there was to be, please, a formal reception. All very nice, kind, and efficient, but, first, Oh! where could we find a grill and some wonderful beer? That must take precedence, and so, with our new friends around us, we ate and talked of the morrow.

“You must see the Avus Trabe from Berlin to Potsdam. That is the way you intended to come? Yes, it is easy in the dark to miss the entrance.” “You will come for a flight over Berlin to-morrow—that is good.” “What is your opinion of our roads?”—and so on. A delightful and promising finale to what had been a long day.

If anything is nicer in Berlin than a *de luxe* bathroom and a bedroom overlooking the Unter den Linden, it is using the bath and eating breakfast in that bedroom, with the French windows flung open, the limes all aglow in the August sun, and song birds to vie with the taxi-driver's best efforts.

A day started thus cannot fail to be a success—and so we found it. The morning was a *tournée* in the supercharged sports car, and with some of our new friends in other cars. Lunch followed, and pleasant company, and then the formidable reception. At this were representatives of the Government, the City, the Automobile interests, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobile Club (A.D.A.C.), the Union of traffic committees, Syndicate of German Towns, the Watering Places, the Hotels Association, and the Press. All very unexpected, and rather embarrassing when the reception developed into a conference, embracing every subject from road improvement to tourist development, traffic regulations and automobile taxation. It was a relief that "war debts" did not figure on the agenda!

Two hours later the meeting broke up and we adjourned to Potsdam. In the party was Baron K., who beguiled the time, as one would expect of a professional soldier, with appreciative stories of British troops and the war. He told of a sniper in a farmhouse who day after day took toll, and heavy toll, of his men; of how finally they attacked in force and captured—a British colonel, a champion shot, but—what to them was far more important—a champion bridge player! He proved a valuable acquisition to Brigade Headquarters until, regretfully, they had to bid farewell, on his departure to a prison camp.

One morning we visited the Templehofer Feld, once the great parade ground where the ex-Kaiser held his reviews. Nowadays it is an aerodrome from which one may take a voyage to any part of Europe. Here Luft-Hansa placed a machine at our disposal, and, under ideal conditions of weather and light, there was unfolded below us, Berlin the city of Magnificence, Monuments, and Museums—and leafy Potsdam

OIL FROM COAL

with its lakes and rivers, the Wannsee, the Müggelsee, the Spree and Havel.

Once again we went out to Potsdam by motor, this time travelling at eighty miles an hour by the Avus Trabe, used exclusively for motor traffic, which stretches in a direct line through the Grunewald.

Potsdam, the Windsor of Berlin, is an interesting old place which owes its origin mainly to Frederick the Great. In pre-war days it was a great military centre, the barracks of the Guard regiments, both cavalry and infantry, in which the ex-Kaiser's sons from the age of ten years commenced the practical side of their military education. Here Baron K. showed us his kaserne and spoke vividly of life as an officer, and of tours of duty at the palaces. Beyond Potsdam itself lies the New Palace of the Emperors, surrounded by a beautiful park and gardens amongst which roamed herds of deer. The spirit of Frederick the Great pervades Potsdam and its palaces, and its consciousness of past glory imparts a quiet dignity, and an atmosphere not to be found in the new and more emphatic Berlin.

Whilst in Germany we had much evidence of the industrial capacity of the people and in no direction is this more clearly shown than in that of oil and its extraction from coal, a problem that has long drawn the earnest attention of German scientists. These realize, perhaps more than those of any other nation, the mechanical turn the future will take, and consequently, the necessity for unlimited supplies of oil. It is all part of the scheme to render Germany independent of foreign supplies, not only of oil but other vital commodities.

* * * *

We found distillation of oil from coal to be a leading question, and as our tour was one of investigation and research, a few remarks on this may be of interest.

Germany has carried out exhaustive tests of every known process in Europe and America, even going so far afield as Japan in the endeavour to find the best. Only three years

ago a German commission came to England with the object of acquiring the torbanite and cannel coal areas in this country, since the latter are rich in oil. There is no doubt that, by distillation, coal will no longer have to compete with coal. It will be free to enter new markets in the form of oil, power gas, domestic gas, and by powdering the residual fuel there can be produced a material which can be as easily handled as oil, and at less than fifty per cent. of its cost, for the same efficiency. Or the residual fuel can be briquetted, when, being smokeless, it would compete successfully on the anthracite and domestic coal market.

From the prominence given to the subject in the press, as from the exceptional opportunities afforded the authors in Germany, and conversation held before and since with leading chemists and professors, it is clear that the vital importance to Britain of the development of the oil and coal industry is being realized. We in England are taking up this matter, and the public is asked to subscribe to companies formed with the object of exploiting the new idea. German experts have found that the capital and working costs of their present method of distillation are too high, and now, after a careful examination of all the known systems, they have declared a process evolved in this country to be the best. The admission is one on which we may congratulate ourselves, although it is not the first occasion on which our brains have made discoveries which Germany has adopted.

The importance of the gas and electrical distribution system, in conjunction with the present organization, will be evident when it is said that the Germans are decentralizing the population, by provision in the rural districts of amenities enjoyed by the towns, whilst at the same time providing work by still further developing agriculture. We must not be surprised if such ingenuity and persistence fructify in due season.

Many parts of Germany, notably those within a wide radius of Berlin, are at present incapable of producing crops profitably, without intensive artificial fertilizing. To



Photo Hansa Luftbild

WE DESERT THE ROAD

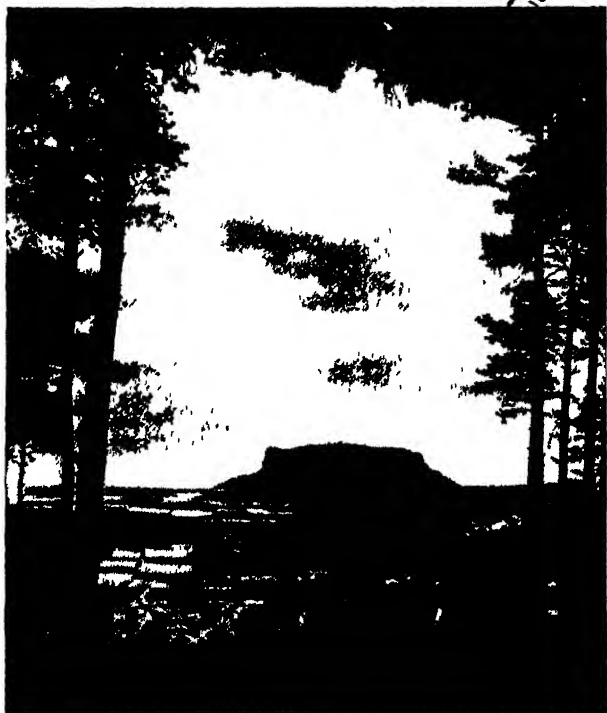


Photo - Resthauszentrale

TOWARDS THE BOHEMIAN FRONTIER OF GERMANY

overcome this difficulty, huge quantities of sulphate of ammonia are now being produced, the nitrogenous fertilizer thus obtained enabling vast areas to be placed under cultivation. With all these new plans Germany is now obtaining the greater part of her domestic oil, together with power, gas and food, and will, within a short time, be independent of foreign supplies in so far as these commodities are concerned.

The crux of the matter as it affects us is that in the distillation of oil from coal there seems to be a basic industry capable of saving the British coal situation, and absorbing many unemployed as it develops. In the same way that Germany is now dealing with her dormant collieries by distillation, we might also reopen some of our own, whilst fresh areas could be exploited, since it would be essential to increase the output, to enable oils to be extracted for the purpose of displacing the foreign article.

The report of the Coal Commission brought into the strongest relief the question of our fuel supply. Transport of to-morrow, whether at sea or on land, will be propelled by oil-engines, and within the past year the developments in aerial research alone are such that the demand for oil has increased enormously. Since at the present time we control only six per cent. of the world's oilfields, the transport of the foreign article in time of war will obviously present difficulties, whilst the ships that carry it, not only themselves require oil, but are open to attack from enemy destroyers and submarines. Moreover, seventy per cent. of shipping now under construction in our dockyards will burn oil, and so an adequate supply of oil is the pivot on which superiority will turn; on which the life of the nation will depend.

It was evident that the Germans realize, in common with the rest of the world, that the war of the future will be mainly in the air, and that a new factor will arise in the science of war, the command of the air. After the last effort no one desires a repetition, but we must be prepared, and should bear in mind that aerial research has progressed to such an extent that a

large hostile air fleet could devastate London. A further digression is called for, and so we would urge that to meet the situation we require superiority not only in numbers, speed and efficiency, but in oil—the dominating factor as envisaged by the Germans, than whom there are no more cool and calculating experts. A short time since, one of us flew from London to the South Coast on an aeroplane travelling at 140 miles per hour ; it was seventy-five minutes in the air and it drank petrol at the rate of half a gallon per minute. The giant planes of to-morrow will consume it at a still greater rate, and the demand for petrol and oil will run into astronomical figures.

The above and other problems absorbed our interest and attention until the day came to leave the joys and hospitality of Berlin for the south, and for Czechoslovakia—the most interesting of the new and progressive states that have arisen as the outcome of the world war. If this were a guide book we would attempt to catalogue the monuments of diversified interest which we either saw, or ought to have seen during our stay. For the most part we were content in our leisure hours to stroll under the magnificent trees of the Tiergarten which extends from the Brandenburger Tor, at the Unter den Linden, as far as Charlottenburg, a distance of nearly two miles, and to make tournées by car around the city.

Whilst in Berlin, we received a call from the President and Secretary-General of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobile Club of Munich, known, for short, as the A.D.A.C. They had paid us the compliment of coming from Munich to meet us and we were their guests at luncheon, followed by an informal conference on various matters of mutual interest. Before we left, the car received the distinction of having the A.D.A.C. badge affixed to its radiator.

It was not easy to get away, though everyone did his best to help. Eventually we moved off with a boon companion, Dr. P., who, like Mr. Britling, had decided to see the thing through by giving us his cheerful company to Dresden. Once

more we passed by Potsdam, and then with cornfields and pine forests for scenery we sped on for 192 kilometres ; a smooth road, largely devoid of villages, and one on which high speed was easily maintained. We paused now and again in trim villages, notably at Treuenbrietzen, whose war memorial proclaimed that 150 of its population had died in the war. Here the server of beer spoke English, had a niece living at Richmond, and hoped we would convey to her his photograph. Recklessly we promised.

One may count on a fast passage from Berlin. The scenery is of little account until the last stage is reached and the bait is one's destination—Dresden.

The city, set amidst beautiful woods and fells, is approached in no better way than by road. So we hurried, in a race with the failing light ; caught the sun as it sank beyond the Saxon Switzerland :

“ Till the shadows, pointing eastward,
Lengthened over field and forest,
Till the sun dropped from the heaven,
Floating on the waters westward.”

And then, with the lights of Dresden for stars, we lowered our speed and—stealing gently in through the trees of the Dresdener Heide, over the Elbe by the Old Bridge—arrived at our hotel.

A wise precaution, before one registers and porters seize the luggage from the car, is to settle the important question “ Wo ist die Garage,” and not to be too easily convinced with the responsive gesture that vaguely indicates, but does not locate it, at a stone's throw distant. The otherwise perfect ending of this day was nearly marred by the contretemps which ensued when Peter arrived back, not alone, but with the car, and vowed that, as the garage proved to be threekilometres from the hotel, and as he refused to foot it back, we had better get the luggage aboard again and seek a hotel—any hotel—nearer to the garage.

It was then that the manager discovered another, quite close,

which had been "overlooked"—and the incident was quite forgotten under the influence of good-fellowship and that which the wine-list revealed ; a '21 hock of incomparable suavity.

Dresden—the German Florence—is an attractive city full of historical associations, and linked with the story of Napoleon, from the battles fought under its walls, and the consistent attitude of support from the king of Saxony whom the French emperor always designated as his faithful ally. Dresden can tell us much of the varying fortune that followed the master of war, and of the vicissitudes through which he passed in the effort to recover his power and prestige in Europe in the dark days of 1813.

Here the great Napoleon made another bid for universal empire against practically the whole weight of Europe. His immediate base was the city, which the army of the Allies was about to attack. Napoleon, on learning their plans, moved at once from Southern Bohemia towards Dresden, leaving a force there to safeguard the city, intending, himself, to cross the Elbe near the Bohemian frontier—hard by where we ourselves crossed it—and whilst the allied army was held in front by one of his corps, to fall upon its rear and, severing its available lines of retreat, to destroy it. A grand piece of strategy, worthy of the great genius who conceived it. The plans were laid and all was in readiness, when a messenger arrived from the corps commander at Dresden reporting that he could not hold the city unaided. The news demanded a sweeping alteration ; so magic was his power of conception that it was formed on the instant, and Napoleon directed Vandamme, with 30,000 men, to hold the narrow valley through the Erz Gebirge at Kulm, and four days later moved from Southern Bohemia, and was in person at Dresden, 118 miles away. They marched, in Napoleonic times.

The combined weight of Austria, Russia, and Prussia was about to attack Dresden, imagining Napoleon to be absent, but so much did they dread the great master of war that on discovering his presence with the army in their front, orders

were immediately circulated to break off the attack and retire as best they might. However, the plans had advanced too far, the onslaught was made—and heavily repulsed along the whole line.

Napoleon then assumed a vigorous offensive, the Allies were driven back in disorder, and cleverly cutting them off from their easiest line of retreat, he forced them through the Kulm passage which they entered helter skelter, a terrible *sauve qui peut*. Napoleon directed the operations in person and so long as he remained on the field all was well ; then supervened an attack of the malady that afterwards killed him at St. Helena ; he handed over the command, and went back to Dresden, thinking that, by the position Vandamme occupied in the defile, destruction of the enemy forces was a certainty. Amongst the flying troops were the emperors of Russia and Austria and the king of Prussia, whose capture would have caused the movement against Napoleon to collapse and have restored his position and authority in Europe. What tremendous risks men run, and how, even when the best schemes have been formulated by the ablest intellect, three-quarters of the result still depend upon accident. The whole course of European history hinged on Napoleon's personal movements that day. He went back. The impetus and drive of the master mind slackened, the lightning orders ceased to inspire the generals, and the Allies, feeling the pressure on them lessening, realized that with the superiority at their command they could easily overwhelm Vandamme. This they did at Kulm the next day ; Vandamme himself was captured, his thirty thousand scattered to the winds, and the turning point in Napoleon's career was reached.

When the Emperor heard of the disaster he said, " I am sorry they've got Vandamme, because when I fight the Devil, he is the only general I have who could tackle him." This remark originated from Vandamme's own declaration that he feared neither God nor devil.

* * * *

Apart from its connection with the Napoleonic wars, Dresden presents a host of interesting things to delight the cultured. Of these its Opera House, one of the finest in the world, is the birthplace of the best of Wagner's works, and where he himself conducted with a skill seldom equalled and never surpassed. There is a suggestion that this magnificent place may fall to the level of a picture palace, but for the sake of the past, and many glorious traditions, we may hope it will recover its erstwhile fame and hold its position in the operatic world.

The motorist will not regret devoting several days to Dresden. With music, art, museums and a lovely hinterland through which well-graded roads wind easily, this is a city on which to centre. There are gorges and woods, pinnacled rocks upreared, and craggy cliffs, and always the glorious reaches of the winding Elbe.

Our plan of reaching the frontier at noon the next day, and Prague in the evening forbad us the joy of lingering in this pleasant city. Further, it was all but wrecked on the flotsam and jetsam of a catastrophe which had fallen on the smiling valley through which our road ran southward. Twenty kilometres out the first signs appeared that all was not well. A temporary bridge, gangs of men, excoriated roadway, were encountered. Then the conditions got worse; until, near Glashutte, the valley was a waste of broken houses, a jamb of timber, a desolation. We learnt how, a week or so before, there had been a cloud-burst like no other within the memory of man. A torrent rushed down the valley, swelling every moment as tributary streams were joined, roaring onwards and carrying all floating things with it. In the narrows between the rocks, by a bridge, the débris jammed; the flood, dammed back, rose and rose, until, bursting its bonds, it became a tidal wave before which hamlets and farmhouses went down as toys. Within the hour a heavy toll of life had been taken, while to those who survived were left sorrow and the uphill struggle to re-establish themselves as best they could, in the years to come.

A GIGANTIC MOVEMENT

For us, the flood damage had this significance, that we were forced up into the hills and over a loop-way, where a humble gasthaus supplied a simple but sufficient meal, and we departed from amongst the assembled lads of the kindly village of Altenberg, inwardly well satisfied, as one cannot fail to be in these old-time inns.

Wherever there are mountains, and during holiday time in Germany, one finds the Wandervogels; not wild beasts or rare flowers—but the “foot-slogging” German youth of either or both sexes. We came upon them in small parties, each with a rucksack and one, usually, with a guitar, tramping from one village to another. They play; sometimes they collect coin, and so pay their way. Always they are bronzed, happy and hatless. Sometimes they are clothed as the boy scout, with whimsical variations, which please them and do no harm, even to the landscape. The Wandervogel is a symptom of the New Germany; a sign of virility; a proof that youth, if not served, will serve itself.

Actually the Wandervogel is more than a symptom. It is a gigantic movement, with pre-war roots and post-war development. Started by Carl Fischer at Staglitz, near Berlin, in 1904, it made considerable progress aided by committees of parents. Even before the war it was not unusual for students to wander through Germany, camping and singing, and perhaps, dancing. War's reactions, however, have swept the movement beyond the original control. The Wandervogels, in demonstrating their spiritual liberty are sometimes accused of license; of repudiating the respect due to authority. Self-determination for nations may be a proper formula, but the same applied to youth has dangers. That is why there are those in Germany who inquire anxiously whether Young Germany has not taken too enthusiastically to the “Youth” Movement.

Presently we won our way into Czechoslovakia. So far the journey had been child's play as motoring; and the conditions were generally good. What had Czechoslovakia in store for us?

CHAPTER III

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND OLD BOHEMIA

“**W**HEN our State was newly established I had to go up and down Europe and America explaining to people that ‘Czechoslovakia’ was not a disease or a new cocktail, but a country.”

Thus spoke Jan Masaryk, son of a wonderful father—the President of the State—and himself the Minister at the Court of St. James. Jan Masaryk’s words were spoken in good English—again because he is the son of a master of a dozen languages, and has the gift, inherent to his country—that of tongues.

Czechoslovakia, physically, is itself a “tongue.” See on the map how it stretches in such proportions; with root lodged well within Germany and point wedged between Poland and Hungary, the tip just touching Romania. In the centre of the root is Prague, the Bohemian capital. A little east is Moravia, then comes Slovakia and away east again Ruthenia. On paper agglomerate, it is, in fact, a well ordered state; a Slav state, with a humour and characteristics savouring of the west; or, as one might say, Irish with Anglo-Saxon ballast. Many people have heard about old Bohemia, but very few know that Czechoslovakia is the ancient kingdom, resurrected under a new name.

Our entry was by a pass in the Erz Gebirge, or as the Czechs have it, in the Krusnohori, and on the edge of this dividing range we came to the frontier post. On one side of the road the German guard, calling the place Zinnwald, are

lodged ; and in an office exactly opposite, but at Cinvald, are the Czechs. Both officials, however, agreed in respect of the contour of their portly figures, as in the speed and precision with which they worked, the one to hasten our exit, the other to help our entry. Everything was completed and in order when Czechoslovakia, having received a modest five shillings as sojourn tax, decorated the car with the Order of the Lead Seal, as evidence to all officialdom that, though foreign, it was duly licensed to circulate.

Prague had warned Cinvald, and so we were expected ; had been, for nearly two hours. But, knowing that our route hither lay through the Valley of the Shadow, Cinvald was, if anything, surprised that we had got through so rapidly. Here were delegates from the North-west Autoklub—the President and Secretary—for welcome and as convoy. Splitting the party between two cars, we were soon away, with Union Jack aloft.

The road leads steeply down from Cinvald ; with sharp corners it winds for sixteen kilometres, passing through groves redolent, in the August sun, with the balsam of pines, and presently it comes to Teplitz-Schonau, or what is now called Teplice. If one expects to find here a raw uncultured village, a surprise is in store. Picture, instead, a place with public gardens, a museum, a considerable café with a lively throng of comfortable citizens enjoying refreshment, music, and each other's company ; this beneath shady trees. Teplice may show no special charm, except the scenery within which it lies ; none the less, it will probably please any traveller on a hot day, when repose and adjournment are desiderata. One does not assess such a place as this according to how it ranks by comparison. The fact is, it may be judged as ordinary and yet it will satisfy. The ordinary, in a new country newly entered, is rated by the visitor higher than its intrinsic worth. It is all either strange, or somehow reminiscent to him—and that is just the sort of experience he seeks.

Pleasure—real and lasting—is derived from the ordinary

things of life, rather than from great and overpowering sensations. And so the little day-to-day experiences influence most effectively the final verdict about a tour. Our sole regret was that all too soon we must excuse ourselves to our friends, interrupt their hospitality, and extricate the car from the pressing throng who, boylike, scented romance in the strange, dusty, auto. and its piled luggage, even though they could guess but vaguely whence it came and not at all whither it would go.

When one is motoring the pauses between whiles are insufficient. They are always too short. There is everlastingly a conflict between the inertia which says, "stay a little longer," and the Original Intention which reminds — "Late already." No sooner is one happily drugged by the local lotus than come the voices of others sounding distant, with a rude awakening :—

" You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

Thus we had been content to remain in the good company in which we found ourselves, but there came an hour when our friends bundled us aboard and telephoned the fact to Prague. Unfortunately they urged us to go to a certain hotel—and thereby hangs a tale.

The ninety-four kilometres to Prague are quickly covered, and leave little but a fleeting memory of Bohemian sugar-loaf hills ringed by deep forests and uprising from flat villages; a memory, too, of a road with some difficult places and not a few bad potholes. Let the motorist not brood too deeply on these potholes. The responsible authorities have decided that they must go. Large schemes of road development have been adopted and the steam-rollers are already busy. In order to accelerate the work, this has been capitalized, and the revenue from various sources hypothecated for the service of the loans. There are fine statesmen at the helm in Czechoslovakia.



Photo Cedok

THE CROWN OF PRAGUE IS THE HRADČANY

QUEER TRAFFIC RULES

At a village, a not unusual coincidence occurred. Both we and the engine, feeling the effect of the heat, needed refreshment; and so a pause at the inn at Terezin, where the famous brew of Plzen was soon forthcoming for us, and the necessary oil for the motor. They told us at Terezin that hereabouts are grown the world's finest hops, as much in demand in England as they are for the beer that made Bohemia famous. We discovered, too, that a notable feature of Czech towns is that the names are prominently displayed at the entrances, for the benefit of motorists—and this in two languages. The signposts along the highways are uncommonly good, so that with a modern map there is no risk of going astray.

Presently the road—after passing the river—enters upon long easy stretches where speed is possible, subject to keeping a wary eye for potholes. Once we were lost at a point where the highway was undergoing "full width" repairs and we had perforce to use our wits around some intriguing lanes hedged with fruit trees, from which at intervals there hung small tufts of straw. We speculated as to the object of this. Was it a fancy to ward off evil spirits, or a sign that the trees had been blessed by the priest, after the manner we had noticed in the quaint republic of Andorra in the Pyrenees? Or was it, as seemed more likely, to signify that the crop had been sold, and that the man who touched it would be a very ass?

And so we came to Prague, entered around a bend in the River Vltava, and not by any impressive route, as is the case when the city is approached from the west. The traffic rule in Prague insists that one must inform the point duty man of the desired direction, by varying "toots." Needless to say we violated this at once, but received no censure except that of the friendly smile and salute which the Union Jack evoked. Arriving late and dusty at the hotel—one can afford only the time for a quick plunge, a rapid change, and dinner. Then a saunter with a pipe to the Charles Bridge; where aloft in the starlight appears the old Castle, the Hradčany,

frowning upon the winding river and the redeemed capital of what, but for the war, had remained an Austrian province.

Prague has a storied past, as the guide-books tell, and a remarkable future. Now, as in days gone by, it lies at the cross roads of Central Europe. The map shows how the great highways intersect it; the direct routes from Bavaria to Warsaw, Berlin to Vienna and others. Under the new régime Prague grows as an industrial centre, with international fairs, a new port on a big waterway, via the Elbe, to Hamburg, and a focus for international air lines.

It may fairly be judged that the development of mechanised farming and industry will be accompanied by a rapid reorganization of roads in all civilized lands—and that Prague will be a principal centre of an international scheme. Europe has been torn by wars, natural progress has been delayed, economic law suspended. The cause has passed and the results are passing. Already there is talk of establishing trans-European motorways, and it is not improbable that these may be constructed in the manner adopted so strikingly in Italy. "So soon as our ordinary roads have been put into order," remarked a German statesman to the writers, "we shall consider the idea of a motor road from Hamburg to Trieste."

We in England know that though we have fine roads, we have few "highways," built on up-to-date lines, for the safe circulation of speedy motor traffic. We shall go on maiming thousands of people, unless suitable routes are established throughout the country. The desire to speed the motor, and to conserve life, will lead Europe to mend its ways—and its highways. Life is increasing in leaps and bounds comparable to those attributed to the pedestrian dodging the reckless motorist. Furthermore, emigration is not counteracting this growth as it did before the war and it is a curious but established fact, that the end of a great war is always followed by a rise in population. Germany, the statisticians say, will have an annual increase of 750,000 persons, and so it is elsewhere in Europe. More people, greater traffic, increased

circulation, more and better roads. Roads, in fact, are regaining the pre-eminence they occupied before the railway era. Thanks to triptyques, frontiers are no longer the obstacles they were, as witness the growing freedom of travel.

Formerly roads were built through Europe for military reasons, but the new traffic, the merchant and the tourist, may prove to be ambassadors of peace, as they pursue their harmless way and lawful purpose.

With these futurist thoughts we left the Charles Bridge under the watchful eye of the Hradčany, and sought our rest.

An advantage of partaking of *petit déjeuner* in one's bedroom is that a precious hour is saved in the morning; and it is as well to have this extra time in hand at Prague, where business starts at a time when, in London, the shutters are still up. At any rate we found it so, for visitors were announced before eight o'clock. These came to apologize. "You were expected, yes, at another hotel"—at the one notified by our Berlin friends, they explained, and there a delegation from the Autoclub had sat for hours the previous night, speculating on our unpunctuality or our fate. Would we accept the letter of apology tendered? No amount of argument would convince S. that the fault was ours. Had we not arranged, they insisted, that the change of hotel should be telephoned to the Club from Teplice? The message had not arrived. We were the injured party—would we forgive?

On a glorious morning, with bright and sunny friends to guide, talk of apologies was fatuous. Prague was the thing—but first some directions for superficial attention to the car; a word about oiling and the little things that matter as the kilometres mount up by the thousand. Half the trouble experienced by motor tourists is traceable either to neglect of the obvious, or the omission to discover what a few minutes with the instruction book would reveal. With luck, a long tour may be accomplished without knowing if the locker contains a pump, plugs, or spanners. But luck is not always in,

when the things that matter are out. A *panne* in a strange land is a thing to avoid as the plague.

To return to Prague—climb, first, the castle hill. Climb it by motor in the morning when the mist has risen from the river and its bridges, but with the smoke still hanging over the fringe of the city, and the main buildings in the foreground clearly enough outlined to complete the picture. Then it is that one gets a glimpse of the spirit, if not the character, of the place. Prague has been called the “Golden” and the Northern Rome. Knowing this, one can weave fanciful ideas about the mediæval castle keeping watch and ward over an ancient city. One forgets the workaday thoroughness of the modern Czech, with his flair for manufacturing, in thoughts of his romantic past.

Prague is a city over whose glories one should not hurry. Better to contemplate it first from aloft, see a little each day, and without effort, and then ransack the nooks and crannies. At the same time avoid exploring this city by guide-book, which is as if to hold an inquest on its hallowed things, passing a wholly inept verdict on ill-digested evidence. Better to acquire its atmosphere as would the artist, who paints not the details themselves but the impression they make. To search too deep or too long is to achieve weariness of foot and, withal, a surfeit. A little sight-seeing goes a long way.

The castle is a city in itself and one may soon be lost in its labyrinths. There is the old Vladislav Hall, dating from the XV century, more than 200 feet long and 60 feet wide ; the Spanish Hall of the XVII century, one of the largest and most attractive in Europe and a study in simple white, the ceiling supported only by a superstructure without columns. When an Englishman visits the castle, they always lead him to one of the courtyards of the castle where stands the finest bronze equestrian figure extant of St. George and the Dragon.

After being conducted over the castle for what seemed hours, we went to talk with Dr. Benes, the Minister for

ALCHYMISTS' ALLEY

Foreign Affairs, and to Dr. Peroutka, the Minister for Commerce. When the history of Czechoslovakia comes to be written in the perspective of time, the name of Benes will stand forth amongst the stalwarts who risked all to support President Masaryk in his campaign for the establishment of the state. Dr. Benes is an admirer of Britain and has motored the length of it this year, enjoying the contrasts of our countryside.

One of the queerest corners of Prague into which we strayed was the Jewish Synagogue, reputed to be the oldest in the world and still in use. It dates from the VIII century. Here the women still have a separate enclosure from which they may hear the rabbi and his prayers, but are not allowed to see what goes on in the synagogue.

Nearby is the Town Hall, with its curious astronomical clock, the chimes of which are rung by a skeleton. The dial shows the position of the sun and moon in the Zodiac, the hour, season, and day of the month. The clock is more than four hundred years old, and amongst its other wonders is the uncanny fact that it suddenly stopped in July, 1866, at the moment when the peace treaty between Austria and Prussia was signed.

From gazing at the city we wandered back through the courtyards of the Hrad. We were shown the queer old Alchymists' Alley of some twenty tiny houses built into the ancient walls of the castle. You can easily touch the roof with your hand. Here Emperor Rodolphe II used to keep his Alchymists hard at work to discover the Elixir of Life, and the Philosophers' Stone. Each house contains a small kitchen about ten square feet and a miniature bedroom. The inhabitants were very friendly towards us, and gladly showed their habitations for a small fee of $\frac{1}{2}$ Kr. (3d.), this being a welcome addition to their meagre earnings.

In one of these doll's houses we noticed a wireless set and listened in to the music of the ether. Could Rodolphe have shared our experience, doubtless he would have loaded honours

and riches upon the occupant, judging him to be a worker of miracles !

In speaking of Czechoslovakia we are apt to regard it as a land without history, as a creation that arose from the Great War, and the recasting of the map of Europe. With Bohemia the world at large was well acquainted, they knew it as part of the conglomeration of nationalities comprising the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but not as a nation with its own culture and its own ideals, struggling for national existence.

Without going deeply into Czech history it may be said that the nation has fought more than once for its autonomy. As a matter of fact, for more than a thousand years Bohemia was an independent, sometimes even a powerful, kingdom. Many times during these thousand years had the Czech state played an important part in European history. The defeat of the protestant Czechs by catholic Austria at the White Mountain near Prague in 1620 marks a temporary eclipse of their national existence. During the religious and national persecutions in the XVII century Bohemia and the Czech nation sank into oblivion. Its aristocracy and middle classes were wiped out or driven into exile, and for nearly two hundred years the nation was dead.

Towards the end of the XVIII century the revival again set in, at the time when nations similarly placed were becoming conscious of racial culture, but it was long ere any concrete national programme was drafted. Indeed, it was not until Masaryk came upon the scene that the course took definite shape and impetus. The history of the republic is closely linked with the greatest of its citizens—Thomas G. Masaryk, now President of Czechoslovakia—who led his people out of the darkness into the dawn of a new era.

On a Sunday we were invited to Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) to lunch and to meet this distinguished commoner. He received us punctually at the appointed time at the Savoy West End Hotel, where he resides when at Carlsbad. His simplicity both sets the visitor at ease and commands respect.



WEST—A BOHEMIAN STRONGHOLD

Photo Cedok



EAST—A ROAD THAT WINDS TO THE TATRAS

Photo Cedok

A FAMOUS LEADER

Here we were in the presence of one of the greatest constructive statesmen of the century—of whom it is written :—

Not to many mortals is it given to crown a long life of 'plain living and high thinking'—aye, and hard fighting—by an achievement such as that of President Masaryk. Still fewer can claim his even rarer triumph of well-nigh universal recognition. The nation which produces a prophet has cause for pride and gratitude; but twice happy is the nation that recognizes the prophet when he comes (Seton-Watson).

In the course of his chequered career the President has had many struggles on behalf of his State; as a member of the Reichsrath, before Czechoslovakia found its freedom, he opposed Austrian policy towards the southern Slavs. By the courageous actions of his lifetime he acquired great popularity and established himself as the champion of Czech independence.

The President is seventy-eight, but he spares little time for leisure. Amidst the anxieties of building up the state and ruling the nation, his pen was busy with a remarkable contribution to post-war literature, "the Making of a State." And now he is engaged upon a philosophic work of considerable magnitude. With all these preoccupations he is acutely aware of the business of being president. To save time he proposed travelling by aeroplane, but was, with difficulty, persuaded not to risk a life which was so precious to his people. "The President listens to the advice given him, but always makes up his own mind," a prominent official said to us. From his years, one might think he would be only a figure-head, but the contrary is the case. A man of temperate habits, not having tasted alcohol for thirty years, he visits Carlsbad for relaxation and not for treatment. To keep physically fit he still enjoys a ride on horseback every morning.

Apropos President Masaryk's love of riding, we were told an amusing story concerning an American newspaper reporter. This enterprising scribe made a speciality of interviewing heads of states while they were indulging in their hobbies. He had seen silent Cal Coolidge in the solitude of his garden.

King Alphonso was in his sporting motor when he received this newspaper man, who followed up this success by interviewing King Christian of Denmark on his yacht. This meant donning the correct nautical rig for the occasion—but what did the expense of the special outfit matter to a wealthy newspaper? His next quarry was Mr. Masaryk—who, the humblest and least assuming of men, raised no objection to the reporter meeting him on horseback. Inspired by the success of the yachting episode, the quick change journalist ordered the most immaculate riding costume Prague could achieve—waisted coat of a pronounced check, white stock, glossy topboots and the tightest “choke-bore” breeches. Solomon in all his glory was shabby compared with the journalist, when he motored to the Presidential residence. Mr. Masaryk came out, shook hands and swung himself easily into the saddle, and waited for the newspaper man to follow. But alas! those breeches were made to be seen and not worn. Struggle as he might the wearer could not raise a leg. He strove and strained and panted and perspired until suddenly there was an ominous tearing sound. The reporter ceased to struggle, and facing the smiling president observed: “Say, do you mind if we postpone this interview a while. I have lost the thread of my main argument.” The amused president graciously waited until the unhappy journalist was extricated from his gaping breeches, and he completed the ride and the interview in a subdued mood and a borrowed overcoat.

In his conversation with us Mr. Masaryk showed lively interest in the question of motor touring, and cordially appreciated the presence of so many British visitors to Czechoslovakia. “We have the same rule of keeping to the left in traffic as you in England,” he said, and added with a smile “but as Europe mostly drives to the right perhaps we shall have to change to its method.” On the subject of road improvement he spoke with some pride about the legislation passed in the previous year to provide the necessary funds.

After meeting Masaryk the man, one realizes the truth of the statement that Czechoslovakia was not born at Versailles, as some say, but created in the early days of the war by the genius of this prophet, and by his tireless efforts to achieve recognition for his nation in France, England, Italy, America, Holland, Sweden, Russia and even Japan, at a time when the man in khaki judged Czechs to be enemies—if he judged them at all.

Born in Moravia in 1850 of humble Slovak stock, his father a coachman, Masaryk, though apprenticed to a locksmith and then to a blacksmith, was trained as a teacher. A humanist, philosopher, student, teacher, author, traveller and patriot he has been described aptly as “the Prague professor—

who went open-eyed into exile, determined to return only when he should bring with him the freedom and the restored independence of his own people—a people whose very name was strange to Allied Governments and peoples (Steed).

We, in England, having given self-government to many peoples, can appreciate the value to the Czechs of what they have won and, having been in at the birth of this state, may perhaps claim a special interest in its father—Thomas Garrigue Masaryk.

The courtesy of our reception by the president was reproduced later by his son, Jan Masaryk, who introduced us to Carlsbad—and Prague ham. With him we visited the springs, sampled, and admitted, the potency of the waters—marvelling at the courage of the votaries who voluntarily and for their health's sake, sip daily from huge beakers. The fame of Carlsbad—as that of its neighbours Marienbad and Franzensbad—is world-wide, but one must visit the town to realize the beauty of its surroundings. Nestling low in a deep fold of the valley of the Tepla, at its confluence with the Ohre, it seems a thing of no significance in the presence of the forest-clad hills that rise on every side. It is, in truth, a small town, having 16,000 inhabitants, with its two main streets forming the banks of

the tortuous, tumbling river. One wonders how and where the gay throng of visitors is accommodated, until a glance at the *pensions* and villas that sprinkle the hills provides the clue.

The motorist may count on many wonderful drives in this entrancing district, for here are gorges and winding roads, waterfalls and forests, in an endless variety of drop scenes.

It was high up on the hillside at the Imperial that we discussed Prague ham—and other equally pleasant things with Jan Masaryk, who is a charming host. Time passed quickly in the pleasant company, but our friend and guide, S., awakened us to reality and to the need of breaking away from Carlsbad, if we desired to regain Prague before dusk.

There were sharp turns on the road ahead, but the surface was good, and speeding often at sixty miles to the hour we soon shortened the distance to the capital. There is another route to Prague from Carlsbad, via Marienbad, the famous Spa beloved of King Edward, thence by the “beer metropolis,” Pilsen, or Plzen, as it is called in Czech. This route is a more picturesque one, especially between Carlsbad, Marienbad and Plzen—but it was too long for our purpose.

The inns of Czech villages boast good Pilsener, and many curious and charming characters—as we discovered at a halt for rest and refreshment. The joviality of the company on such an occasion is infectious. It was stimulated by our companion and his merry quip and jest with those who neighboured us. Soon we were quite at home, here at a wayside hostelry—though the speedometer registered 1,800 miles from London—enjoying a new angle of life, and sidelights on the ordinary pleasant things that go to make this workaday old world bearable. No one had seemed in the least surprised that a beautiful car of strange make should have unloaded two obvious foreigners into the midst of their Sunday gathering. Perhaps the Union Jack served as all the introduction necessary. Perhaps—but then the fact remains that the folk of the village responded to the stimulus with rare

humanity. In England we are very polite, but we do stare so in our effort to sum up the foreigner on first appearance. “Who, whence, why?” our look interrogates. Afterwards, and from politeness, we leave him to himself, not conceiving that this act may be taken to imply aversion.

The fact that supper under the acacias awaited us at Zbraslav, which lies a little to the south of Prague, set the wheels in motion again. From Prague one reaches this pleasant rendezvous, by what one may call the “Suicides’” road, without unduly distorting the Czech nickname. A new road is this, whereon misguided people drive too fast and come to an end before their destination. The nickname may no longer be deserved, if the authorities have taken the disciplinary steps they told us were in contemplation.

Of the supper party no record is necessary. Of the following day at Prague, with willing friends doing us yeoman service there is even less need to tell, except the episode of the Bank. Banks in this city are a safe deposit for one’s money—so safe in fact, that without a little foreknowledge one may have to depart on the last day without it. This is not because the bankers are cunning fellows or that they presume too much. Indeed they are courtesy personified—when one gets to meet them. It is the getting that is the rub. “I’ll draw some money at so and so o’clock” you say. But six times out of ten you will be wrong. You won’t. You can’t. The bank is shut—and you negotiate a cheque with some hotel official at a ruinous rate of exchange. Be wise. Shop early.

One recalls that a great figure in Czech history was the late Count Lützow, who paved the way to political independence of the Czechoslovak nation. The Count was a famous Bohemian historian and patriot, and in London he was often referred to as the Ambassador for Bohemia. His versatility was remarkable; he was a grand seigneur, ran a racing stable, was an erudite writer of world-wide repute and translated Komensky’s classic, “The Labyrinth of the World.” Kubelik made his debut in

the Countess' drawing room in London, and the Count when in Washington was invited to address Congress—a rare honour. He died in Switzerland in 1916, and his remains rest in a beautiful mausoleum on his estate at the Château de Zampach in the midst of the fir and pine woods of his beloved Bohemia. The Countess Lützow is still a familiar figure in London society and her dinners and receptions are noteworthy.

At one of the social gatherings which were such a feature of our stay at Prague, the question of the Czechs' command of languages was discussed. Say "She sells sea shells" we challenged. Neither this, nor the other well-known catches defeated our friends, who replied by asking us to try:—

"STRČ PRST SKRZ KRK."

which, of course, was wholly beyond our capacity. And when afterwards we wanted to order ice-cream and were told that the word for this is "Zlmzlina," we wondered how ever they managed to freeze it!

It is fortunate that with English, French or German, one can make oneself understood, for Czech defies achievement by the ordinary Briton.

We were quite sorry to leave Prague. We had seen most of the prescribed sights, had enjoyed good company, discriminating tournées, and casually watched the ebb and flow of the city from the vantage points of the café, the Kavarna, the street, or the club. We had found the Prager to be sociable. They say he speaks more languages than any other race and that his city has more newspapers than London. Perhaps that is the source of his lively outlook—or because of his sense of humour. Certainly the Czech is witty; in a manner that is Irish. And, politically, too, he has something in common with the Irish, whose early Home Rule efforts were the inspiration of the Czech National movement, which, in turn, having succeeded, was a stimulus to those directing the Cause in Ireland.

A few stages beyond Prague, towards the East, it is wise to begin planning the journey with care, for the distances between



THE OPEN DOOR



WISHING WELL



A CZECHOSLOVAKIAN SHEPHERD



SEEN IN SLOVAKIA

suitable halts for food and lodging increase to a point where an error in calculation may result in quite unnecessary discomfort. With forethought, however, the route through Czechoslovakia into Germany and on into Poland, need cause no trouble. Knowing this, and with 208 kilometres to cover to Breslau, we headed out from Prague so that by noon Ml. Boleslav (Jungbunzlau) and luncheon came in sight at fifty-one kilometres. The way was dusty, but along a level surface often fair and only sometimes bad—but this will yield to the steam-rollers which, they told us, would soon be at work. Trees border the road, which passes between small tillage farms. There are little fields, a blaze of red, where the poppy is grown for the seeds used to flavour the delicious crescent rolls one eats of a morning. Shortly one enters a land of increasing charm as Boleslav is approached and the way leads towards the hills.

We had said, "Here we shall have to rough it. Cheese and beer and perhaps goat or some eggs." We were quite wrong. The Grand Hotel is a modern building of three stories, with a restaurant and Kavarna, picture post-cards, baths, a dance hall, and telephone. It is not a palace, but it removed the illusion that we were "roughing it." It had another effect. Like a flash the idea came to Peter:—"We may have trouble en route to Breslau, who knows. Let us get the luncheon basket re-charged." And so we dug our White Elephant from the depths to which it had gravitated, stood it a square meal and a few bottles of wine and lager—not in any optimistic spirit, but with prevision which past experience did not justify.

Not only is there good food at Boleslav, but we obtained mobiloil from the chemist, who also sold us English toothpaste, potted meat and razor blades, and could have fulfilled a wider variety of needs from his miscellaneous stock.

We pressed on now for Breslau in the hot afternoon, with one eye on the clock and speedometer, and the other dividing attention between the scenery and the road as it began to rise

and twist among the foothills of the Riesen Gebirge. Through Sobotka, Jicin, Nova Paka and Trutnov we passed, the surface improving in the verdant uplands where there is less of dust. Here are a succession of deep forests and receding valleys—a veritable delight for the motorist. In due time the road winds to the German frontier, between Konigshan and Liebau, crossing at an altitude of 1,600 feet. The officials at the custom posts, both Czech and German, did their duty with alacrity. Nothing could have been more efficient. They knew exactly how to handle the triptyque and carnet, and what to do with the tax papers, and international travelling pass. It was only our passports with their maze of endorsements and visas that taxed their resources. How to find the bit that concerned them was the puzzle. Finally the German warned us to desert the Czech rule of the road, and keep to the right.

Now the highway, still improving and in places really good, rises and falls, to rise again. The gradients are often steep, with pinches of one in ten; and the bends need care, for there is quite enough traffic of farm and timber waggons zigzagging wearily in the intense heat, to necessitate a sharp look out.

The A.A. route beyond Landeshut proved fast and gave excellent going, falling steadily until presently Breslau, on the Oder, was reached through a populous district. The first landmark encountered on the road into the city was the Funkstunde, the wireless station, and this was our objective. We were expected—expected to broadcast! and here we were, within a few hours of the appointed time. Herr Director O., however, freely acquitted us of the obligation of addressing Germany, and revealed instead the mysteries of the station, proving himself to be the most attentive of hosts. Dinner at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten on a garlanded terrace overlooking the Biergarten, the night air, balm after the blistering day, with jolly company and lavish hospitality, is an episode rather than just a meal. Thus it is recorded in the diary.

It is said that the Germans of Silesia are a sour race and dull, but such is not the impression made by the folk

encountered in Breslau. There is here all the gaiety and lightheartedness of a great continental city. It may be the countryfolk deserve the description, but such as we came into contact with, belied it. They made themselves obliging enough, and certainly smiled as easily as the German in the west. At Breslau one hears the Upper Silesia question and Polish frontier, mentioned with emphasis, for Breslau has decided views, and crystallizes the opinion of the district—and of Germany. This, then, is not only ground of historic import from the association of wars which have been waged on, and because of it. The question still burns. One is told frankly that Versailles and Geneva settled nothing—permanently. Silesia may yet cause far-reaching reflexes, and the Powers do not conceal their continued anxiety. Over the cigars and coffee tongues wag freely. “What would the Midlands say if part of the Black Country were wholly severed from it?” That illustrates the burden of the local argument. The surgical operation that divided Silesia between the Germans and Poles was a severe shock to the former. “It brings home to us what losing the war means” exclaimed Rathenau, the Minister for Reconstruction.

The coal and other mineral resources of Germany are largely centred in that region, and the industrial cities and towns there, are mainly dependent upon it for supplies. Moreover, even in days prior to the Great War, the Silesian question was full of difficulties and dangers. This was originally Bohemian and Polish ground. German Silesia was a part of Bohemia—“the lands of the crown of Bohemia”—and was ceded to Prussia during the reign of Frederick the Great, by Maria Theresa of Austria-Hungary in 1757. A small part of Silesia still remains Czechoslovak. Posen was originally Polish; and now is again. It was taken by Prussia at the Partition of Poland in 1815; or rather retaken, for it had already passed to Prussia at the first and second partitions of Poland in 1772 and 1793, but had been restored by Napoleon in 1807.

The Germans continued thereafter to exploit and develop

the resources of their new territory, laws were enacted curtailing the ambitions of the Poles towards national solidarity, whilst the Polish language was prohibited and their religion banned. Possibly the German attitude towards the Poles left something to be desired. That is a matter for the historian to judge. Whatever its evil points, it certainly contributed to the opening up of the country, and to the development of Silesian resources, and thus enhanced greatly to the material growth of the German Empire.

As the German hold became consolidated upon Silesia, so the land passed more into the hands of the nobility, which from the Polish standpoint led to more dissatisfaction than might otherwise have been the case. The friction between Germans and Poles is not very apparent, but seemingly it exists, and the eventual solution of the Silesian problem rests with the future. This is what they tell you at Breslau.

An Oriental proverb says that the traveller should hear as well as see all he can, and, as for us, we retail the gossip and our impressions as received, without partisan comment. Years ago, in London, reports of the arguments at Versailles induced only a feeling of boredom. "Why can't they settle the whole thing quickly—what are all these petty questions of frontiers they haggle about so tediously?" the man in the street would ask. Transfer him now to Breslau, or where you will along the borders of the succession States, and you will see his interest quickened, to learn the why and wherefore of what was done. Many will endeavour to enlighten him and to seek his support of their point of view. Let us hope that these border-line differences may be adjusted by the same arbitrament of the tongue, rather than by that of the sword.

CHAPTER IV

POLAND—THE NEW ORDER

IT is a two hours run from Breslau to Wartenberg, beyond which lies the gateway to the New Poland. At first, more undulating forests bordered our road, these being gradually succeeded by level pastures and harvest-fields, till we reached the frontier of one of the largest countries of Europe. Here we were to encounter yet another phase of life, thought and being. Entering Poland one finds a strange land. We were leaving behind the German and his culture, to meet the Slav and his slow but deep mentality. Here was a parting of the ways of life. Old Poland had emerged as New, but had the Slavonic nature conformed to the new ideals? There had not yet been time to recover from the shock of forces which on both its eastern and western sides have assailed it, to an extent under which another and less virile nation would have succumbed.

With the sun blazing in the heavens, we did our devoir at the custom post—a simple procedure in view of our straightforward documents, but not so easy for all travellers. While we wait, a peasant arrives travelling east. Everything in the sacks on his ramshackle cart is exposed to view on the balcony floor. "There is a traffic in saccharin and drugs," explained the officer, "and our orders are strict." "Yes, sometimes we search motorists in this way—but the tourist never." There is almost a law of inverse ratio about this; the farther the tourist is from his base, the easier will he find the passage of a frontier!

Some, recollecting the storybooks of childhood, think of Poland as a land of perpetual snow, of sleigh bells, of wolves. That may fit the North Pole, or Poland in winter, but not Poland under an August sun, when travelling in shirt-sleeves is comfortable.

The reality imparts a different aspect—an immense tract embracing the lowlands of the Dniester, the valleys of the Tatras and the forests of Central Poland. Once within Polish territory the lie of the land changes. Instead of mining districts and busy industrialism, vast areas meet the eye, with forests here and there, and the wide road goes on for hundreds of kilometres, broken occasionally by a village or town. When the horizon is reached, there is still the same straight line ahead, the same horizon. If ghosts walk, they have ample opportunity here.

Villages are few and far between, and composed often of log huts with thatched roofs, and an occasional attempt at exterior decoration. You may see a hut with vari-coloured signs painted on its doors and sides. This is to indicate that within is a marriageable daughter, for whose betrothal the parents are open to negotiation. A wedding lasts for days, and the bride wears a floral crown with streamers of ribbons, each of which has been presented to her by Polish lads, and so her beauty and popularity are gauged by the number of her ribbons.

Undoubtedly the least interesting part of Poland is the great central plain, across which our route now lay. A tour with more leisure than we could afford, would seek the Carpathians, the attraction of which is pronounced in the west—that is in the Western Beskides and around Zakopane and the Tatra. Here will be found accommodation for tourists, and excellent amenities for exploring the heights.

Situated at the base of the Tatra, Zakopane is an ideal centre, being the largest tourist resort in Poland, while a half-day run to the north, is Cracow, which is easily the most interesting city. Here are the tombs of the Polish kings, and all those wonderful relics associated with the ancient capital.

From Kepno to Lodz, our road was dead level and straight, with a few fast stretches, but with others that were execrable. Steam-rollers were at work, however, and good progress was clearly being made in face of difficulties. Here was a military road of amazing width. What traffic of armies, guns, commissariat, and even refugees, had flowed and ebbed and flowed again since 1914, finally to recede, leaving a devastated highway, a ruined countryside, and poverty. It was, however, a fearless, splendid poverty, which industry, and the unextinguishable spark of Slav hope, are steadily consuming. That provides a reason why there were five steam-rollers on the road when we travelled from the frontier to Warsaw.

Before the war, Lodz was the second largest textile centre in Europe. Its population, exceeding half a million, has fought against heavy odds. A town of textile operatives, without a vestige of machinery left when the war ended, Lodz has hung on, and, to-day, the big chimneys are smoking hard. We were given some distressing details by a chance acquaintance at the Grand Hotel over lunch, "but we try to forget these things," he added. Perhaps he was able to forget the easier, in the recollection that Lodz, by being the centre of the "Underground" Polish movement in the 'nineties, held a proud distinction, and could afford to show a spirit capable of rising superior to the motives of its oppressors.

After Lodz, the everlasting plains continued, with dark forests of pine here and there. By description nothing could be more dull, but this is not the sensation. A new peasantry is always an interesting study, and these had the added claim on us, that they were the people of this land of romance and resurrection. There is hardly a minute on the journey to Warsaw in which some incident, trivial perhaps, but novel, does not take the attention or start a train of thought. And all the time one feels a great pity for the people, knowing that their sad faces and simple poverty betoken cruel events that happened such a little while ago. Here are men and women patiently mending the road—and with what? It is the old

rubble and stone from houses in that village over there, gutted by the invader, or by the retreating Russians, during the war. Again one sees a gathering of men and women in the village, their clothing an animated confusion of colour. These are Poles. Others, in twos and threes stand by the rows of little shops, clad in the long, black and dingy "halat." Those are Jews, as their curl of hair—the pejsy—proclaims.

Out of a total population of nearly 31,000,000, over nine per cent are of this latter race. Journeying along this road one would have guessed a higher proportion, possibly because the Jews are congregated where traffic passes, and trade is to be done. Dressed always in the same depressing black, they throng the market place, and are much in evidence on the highways, as they move about in their carts laden with produce or merchandise, and drawn by two or three wretched ponies. Telescopic four-wheeled carts are a feature of Poland, and vehicles of similar design, but varied in detail, will also be met with everywhere throughout the Balkans. The "chassis" is a skeleton, a V-shaped affair, and the length can be extended by moving back the rear wheels, the axle of which slides in a guide-block. At full extension and when well-laden with miscellaneous goods, poultry, and perhaps the whole family, the cart presents an amazing appearance.

Compared with that on an English, French or German country road, the traffic we encountered was heavy. It seemed as if the people were migrating, so great at times was the press. Alongside the road the fields stretched away, and where there was pasture, there also would be a small flock of geese, a few cattle, and always children tending them, lest they strayed on to the fenceless road, or beyond some unmarked boundary.

Their heads swathed in kerchief or shawl, the little Polish maidens are a pleasant sight. One hopes that they have never had their hearts made heavy with the tales we heard, of how the Russians in their retirement, took men, women, children



PEASANT ART HAS SURVIVED IN LOWICZ



AN AEROPLANE CRASH

and all animate creatures with them ; a retreat in which thousands perished.

Back, nearer the frontier, we had passed through towns with gaunt skeletons of houses and factories, devastated by the war. Here, however, towards Warsaw, little damage was apparent. The injury had been sustained by the people only.

Interesting from an ethnological point of view, is Lowicz, which we presently entered. Both men and women have preserved their pretty and highly coloured national costumes, the characteristics of which are wide stripes. The women's skirts are full, as are the sleeves of the blouses, worn under a sleeveless waistcoat, and their heads are adorned with scarves, knotted behind.

What with studying the people, dallying at villages, and proceeding cautiously when the surface was bad, our progress was slow, and the need was on us to waste no more time, if we wished to make Warsaw before sundown.

But our calculations were upset. Approaching us along this road in the midst of the Polish steppes was—an aeroplane! An aeroplane towed by horses ; and then we received signals of distress from the pilot, who was walking dejected, dusty and perspiring beside it. With the aid of Russian which P. had acquired when in the heart of Asia, we learnt that the engine had failed, there had been a forced landing, and now under stress of towing, the wheels had seized for lack of oil.

So we rendered first aid and, happy thought, let us celebrate the occasion ! Out came the luncheon basket and we cemented the Anglo-Polish entente in the beer of Plzen.

Early impressions gathered on entering a strange city are apt to last ; whether right or wrong. Ours as we drove along in the darkness through the outskirts of Warsaw was one first of cemeteries, succeeded by a squalid Jewish quarter with nothing artistic to relieve it. Jews in black. Jews chaffering. Jews at open doorways that gave access to dim-lighted foetid interiors of shabby shacks. Three hundred and sixty thousand

of the million inhabitants of the city are Jews. One realizes this approaching from the west.

Later we viewed the real Warsaw. Its magnificent proportions and its citadel reveal themselves. This is a metropolis, with many-windowed houses, steep sloping roofs, stately pillared doorways with carved symbols, and withal, fine buildings and boulevards, along which pass crowds of well-dressed folk. At the Polonia Palace Hotel, on Jerozolimska Avenue, efficient porters made quiet work of unloading the dusty car, and the director attended personally to see that the bed-sitting rooms, each with its private bath, met with approval.

So we came to Warsaw, the cross-roads of East and West, that open on to the avenues of world trade—to Moscow and the Far East, to America by way of the Baltic, by Vienna, Budapest and the Black Sea, to Berlin, Paris and London. One of us knew Warsaw in pre-war days when it was under the heel of the Muscovite, when a Russian Grand Duke was its Governor, and the Cossacks of the Don careered through its streets, brandishing their long knotted whips that cut like a knife. Although a great and welcome change has come over Warsaw since Poland found its freedom, the streets are full of bitter memories.

The citadel, is a gloomy set of fortifications that can tell us much of Polish history of the past hundred years. It rises high above the banks of the Vistula, and is the dominating point, as its creator intended it should be. In the course of their chequered career, the Poles have figured in rebellions to win the freedom to which they considered themselves so rightly entitled, and so it came to pass that in 1830 they made a supreme effort towards that end. It failed, and met with dire punishment at the hands of the Tsar Nicholas I. The scope and object of the rebellion against Russian authority demanded, in the eyes of the Russian ruler, drastic action, and the retribution took the form, *inter alia*, of the creation of a fortress in Warsaw, from which the Tsar's authority might be the more effectively asserted. No fortress in the world can compare with

it, for every stone was hewn and laid by Polish hands, and every kopeck expended upon it was wrung from Polish taxpayers at the point of the bayonet, and by the lash of the knout ; and when its completed walls frowned down upon the city, the ringleaders in the rebellion, were led forth and shot or hanged upon its ramparts, while hundreds more were condemned to life-long imprisonment within its dungeons. So, vengeance was the Tsar's, and the Poles sank still further under the heel of tyranny into the mire of oppression.

Times change with the circling years ; the citadel is no longer to be dreaded, for it is now a rendezvous of Sunday society, and bands, music, and singing are the order of the day. In the Saxon square, the Russians, labouring for eighteen years, had erected a gigantic church. It was completed just before the war, but now the Poles have completely removed every stone of this staring monument of the aggressor. So, too, has gone the obelisk, which the Tsar Alexander had put up in honour of his Marshal, Paskevitch, who suppressed the Polish revolt in 1830. In London we had thought of the destruction of this wonderful church as quixotic, perhaps as vandalism. When we stood on the site we saw a little clearer, and realized that the Poles rightly removed this monument of Russian domination.

The welcome we received in Warsaw was very comforting. Comforting and welcome also were the fiery vodka, the caviare, the wine and good meats, though on first acquaintance, the bortsch, brewed of the juice of the beetroot, was not so convincing. Letters had awaited us, and these announced that the writers would call during the evening. They arrived in fact, before our first leisurely meal was finished, and so the plans for the morrow were discussed.

Now to dispose of the car. The hotel director attached a page-boy to the running board, and he, by " Na pravo," " Na Levo," " Prosto," did his excited best to indicate the way. It seemed as if half the streets were under repair, so that we wound this way and that, before reaching the garage. This, complete

with lock-ups, petrol pumps and skilled mechanics, left nothing to be desired ; and soon directions for adjustment were conveyed by us, in French, which often serves in Poland.

* * * *

If your aim is to see the city, take a droshky. The driver, his number on the back of his neck, will urge his horseflesh no faster than you want it, or it intends, to go. Hire a droshky, but take a friend as guide, for then you will compass the object of your voyage to advantage. You may not care for the taxis ; some are not good. This is because the custom duty, imposed for revenue purposes, is high, and the fares are fixed very low ; so low that we drove for over two hours for less than eight shillings.

Note the traffic police. Observe their efforts. Excuse their tolerance of disobedience, as you would in Ireland, for it arises from a courteous instinct. These men had some training by British instructors, and that is something in which we can share their pride. It is the same in Greece and other Balkan States—a tribute, this, to the London force. The Warsaw police have difficulties to contend with. The traffic is careless, and one can wish that drivers would stretch out their hands as freely as do the beggars. On the subject of traffic, it is well for the tourist to be warned that there is an edict forbidding electric horns in the city.

From London the car had now covered 2,207 miles, without so much as a misfire or puncture. There had been nothing to attend to, except wash, replenish and oil. We gave it a thorough examination at Warsaw and decided that the most important advice to those who come to Eastern Europe is (1) Fit the loudest possible electric horn, and a bulb horn for city use. (2) Fit efficient side lamps and dimming as well as dipping control for the headlights. (3) Fit large double acting shock-absorbers and big tyres. (4) Have an extra leaf put in the springs and carry spare top and second leaves. This last advice is not based on our experiences. We carried the spare all round Europe, but never used it. At the same

time, it is comforting to know it is there, and, in the knowledge, one takes chances which otherwise would not be justified.

The difficulty about a tour of the duration of ours is that the luggage carried necessarily amounts to overloading. From Prague we had sent some impedimenta back—which never reached London—but even thus lightened, the car had so much to carry that one could not pick up a friend for even a few miles without knowing that his presence was an outrage on the mechanism.

Satisfied that the car was in excellent fettle, we gave ourselves over to our hosts. First a formal luncheon party, then a visit to the Foreign office for a conference on questions relating to touring, and after that to the Auto Klub. Here we learned that a request to broadcast had come from the wireless station; could we oblige within half an hour? And presently there travelled across the ether a message from Britain, which lost none of its cordiality from the fact that it was largely unintelligible to listening Poland!

* * * *

Shortly after the war, the one thing that disturbed the minds of western diplomats was Poland. Her position was unenviable. Internally she was weak. Externally she was menaced. Could she consolidate her position, or would the fabric dissolve in confusion and a welter of human sacrifice, before the march of Communism?

Now the fears are stilled. Poland has stayed the first few punishing rounds, and should win through—thanks to that curious blend of genius and patriotism, with the more unstable temperamental qualities that are both an asset and a liability to the Slav.

The Polish children are also imbued with the spirit of new-found freedom. In 1920 boys and girls drilled in Warsaw, Lwow, Krakow and other towns, marched in ranks against the Bolshevik, met him, and turned him from the gate.

As we stood by the grave of the Unknown Soldier at the colonnade by Saxon Square, we wondered whose was the

body that lay there under the wreaths. Was it Poland's Saint Joan?

Much that we saw and did at the capital comes back only as a confused medley. The mind is not a "movie" camera to record the kaleidoscopic incidents. Besides, this is not a guide-book, and so the details of fine buildings, of the royal castle, the Palaces of Lazienki and Wilanow, of the Market Place in the Old Town, of the Galleries, must be sought elsewhere. Our time was running short and so early one morning the luggage went back into its place. Then a call at the Romanian Legation to ensure that Bucharest had notified the frontier of our coming—and we were away, with another page-boy parked among the bags. His function was to lead us across the Vistula and through the complexities of the suburb of Praga, to spare us the embarrassment of arriving at Petrograd instead of Bucharest. Now the great highway to the south-east began, and for 650 kilometres it follows this course with little deflection to right or left. It begins atrociously, and though the steam-rollers we saw will still the misgivings of those who follow us, they brought small comfort. Certainly long stretches of the surface had been repaired and, indeed, we maintained an average of twenty-five miles an hour all the day. The scenery is that of the steppes, and for most of the way the road follows the Vistula valley until Lublin is reached, and then, rising gradually over the foothills of the Carpathians, the character of the view changes.

They had been sceptical at Warsaw that we would find accommodation at Lublin, but their pessimism was unwarranted. The Hotel Victoria has a passable appearance, but it understood only Polish. After a little dumb show the concierge had an inspiration, and left hurriedly, to return presently with a companion.

This was the sole representative of the Y.M.C.A. at Lublin, and he spoke English. With his aid we agreed to pay eighteen zloty for two bedrooms—five shillings, and this with extras, tips, and town tax, totalled on final settlement to fifteen

LUBLIN'S GHETTO

shillings; altogether good value. After that, our young man attached himself to us. He adopted us. "I will show you the restaurant" he said, and then sat with us, ordered for himself as well as for us and was pleased to have our company. At first this was amusing, then we tired of it, but, we changed our opinion later, when he guided us through the purlieus of the old Jewish Ghetto, and told of the catacombs underlying it. One half of the population of Lublin is Jewish, and the sight of the conditions under which they live, huddled in crumbling and crowded houses that flank the most forbidding of streets, started thoughts, which our guide's offer to lead us to where there was good coffee, happily interrupted. It was a joy to the youth to speak English once again, and so keen was he, that next morning at six he was on the doorstep to bid us adieu.

Travelling down this great highway, we were in continual contact with people whose history is a record of personal adventure, in war, exile and starvation. Their faces show how they have suffered—the haunting terror of the past, with a glimmer of their faith in a secure future. Living in open spaces they are inured to hardship, and cradled in adversity. Their existence has been in constant jeopardy, and you note their deferential manner of greeting. Men and boys "bob" as did peasants in England to the squire a couple of generations back. If you attempt to take a photo you must be tactful and humour them. Not yet have they complete confidence in strangers in strange motor cars. They have every reason to be mistrustful; their experience has taught them that. All this gives to the journey a dynamic interest. One is seeing Poland in cameo. Coming upon a group of boys and girls, we stopped and got out the cameras. By the time we had descended they had fled in alarm, leaving nothing to chance.

The Jews in Poland are intimately connected with the life of the people, and are so numerous that they appear to form the majority of the population. In the villages they are the principal medium of commerce between the inhabitants.

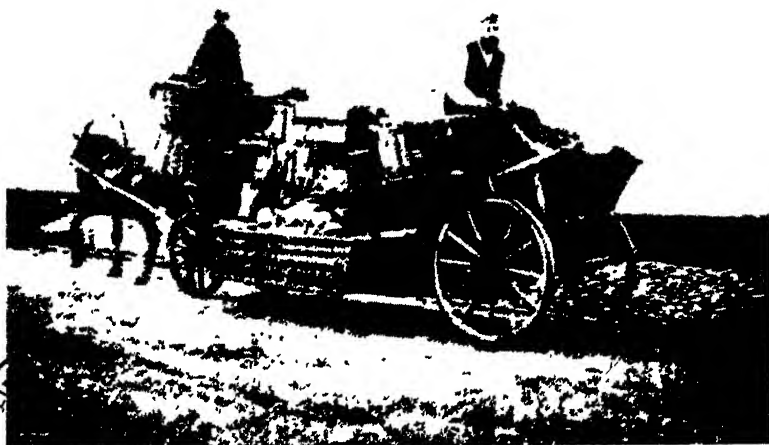
Many of them are wandering traders, the nomad amongst humble craftsmen. They are met with on the journey across Poland, carrying their portable workshop and their scale of undercut prices, and the rapidity with which they clean a picture, mend a plough or a clock, or restore the colour to a lady's dress, makes them much in demand.

The almost universal dress of long black cloak and skull cap denotes the Jew, and it was difficult sometimes to thread our way through the villages, especially when it happened to be market day, so intent are they upon their bargains, monopolizing the roadway and conducting the sale of everything from a glass of the fiery vodka to a yoke of oxen. Often we met them moving from one village to another; their merchandise might be on the long carts already described, but if room is lacking on the carts they plod along the highway in single file like a train of Red Indians, with the oldest and most sanctimonious of the group as leader.

As elsewhere in the world where they find an abiding place, the characteristics of the Jewish race are distinct and although their daily life is bound up with that of the Polish people they never lose their own special creed. With the coming of dusk on Friday evening they close the shutters of their shops, for it is the Sabbath eve, and the Jew is strict in his observance. This also means the weekly bath, when all go to the river where, with a hasty splash over hands and face, the demands of the bath are complied with. Candles are lighted in every house, the women appear in gaudy costume with cheap jewellery, and for twenty-four hours the Jew more or less comes into his own, mindful of the days when under the Muscovite heel he was treated with Draconian severity.

* * * *

Leaving Lublin, we kept still to the south-east. Here are roadside cemeteries where warriors rest; and none the less easy because the grass grows high above them, and there new bridges, and now a road-mending gang, while around are windmills and old cottages on the plain. We are traversing



THE JEW AND HIS CARRY-ALL

Photo Authors



HARVESTERS OF SOUTH POLAND

Photo Authors

a land that retains much of Polish village life, where the peasant clings to age-old customs with extraordinary tenacity, and conservatism shows itself at every angle in the daily round. He prefers the loom and the spinning wheel to their modern prototype, a bed is disdained, and he sleeps on top of the oven, and over the doorway you will find a little package of grain, blessed by the priest on Lady Day, so that evil influence may be warded off, and all go well with the crops.

The Polish peasant mother rejects the ordinary cradle; instead, she puts her child in a basket woven from the branches of an adjacent tree, fastens it to a cord, and suspends it from a supple stick placed between the rafters of the hut. So in place of the side to side motion to which we have all been subjected, the Polish baby goes up and down.

They are simple folk, these dwellers of the plains, and the cheery welcome of the people and the pleasing gesture when one most needs it, are just what they should be, where cordiality towards the stranger within their gates, is a feature of the Polish character. The autocratic nature of the Muscovite rule has not suppressed the innate civility of these people to any extent.

The fact that their language was banned under the Russian domination, and the outward and visible signs of Polish nationality eliminated from the life of the citizen and the peasant, made them cling all the closer to them. One wonders if the Tsar himself knew of all that was going, and the scope of the laws that were issued in his name. There is the story of the Polish specialist in Petrograd, who had been called in to attend the imperial patient. His command of the Russian tongue was perfect, so much so that the Emperor expressed admiration for his linguistic ability, at the same time enquiring when and how he had attained to that degree of proficiency. The answer was to the point, "Because in Poland we are not permitted the language of our nationality, and so must learn Russian." "Really, is that so," said the Tsar, "I never

knew it," and so arises the surmise whether he knew of much else that went on within the Russian Empire.

Almost all Poland has been traversed by contending armies in the war, successive hosts of Russians, Germans, and Austrians, while military law and government have in the past descended heavily upon the people. Perhaps it was emphasized with greater significance in Poland, for the Russians ruled the land with a rod of iron. It was not only here that Russia asserted authority; in pre-war days her might and power were generally accepted, although territorial increase had been attained by policy rather than by conquest. This was fortunate in some cases, since the extent to which speculation was carried on not infrequently rendered the armed forces of the empire unfitted for a rapid and successful campaign. We were told by an ex-official, of a regiment of four battalions that existed only on paper, but for which pay and allowances were drawn, the Minister of War himself sharing in the proceeds.

We heard, too, stories of military despotism and the method of dealing with complaints by resourceful generals, who objected to aspersions being cast upon their conduct. One of these martinets commanded a brigade with such drastic severity that even the patient Russian soldier could no longer tolerate him, so when the Tsar was reviewing them, after the customary salutation by the Emperor, of "Good morning, my children," "Good morning, Majesty," a cry arose for a new commander. At first the Tsar was puzzled, but the general explained it as a loyal call, and so the inspection proceeded. When the Emperor had departed and the general was left in charge he turned the brigade about, marched it to an adjacent river, and kept it marching until it was practically up to the neck in water. Then the commander discoursed on the impropriety of questioning his rule and authority, and after half an hour of this chilly punishment the brigade was marched out. It says much for the docility and inherent respect for authority in the Russian soldier that swift action was not taken with the general.

Everywhere we saw and heard evidence of the corruption rife in the Russian forces, how the shells would not fit the guns, of ammunition that went off in a harmless puff, and the boots that wore out in a day or two, being made of hardened paper. We had met a similar state of affairs in Russia in pre-war days, when batteries of artillery were often composed of different types of gun. This arose from the fact that the agents of various gun-making firms were in the Russian capital, and those who had the giving of the contracts were playing off one against another, and increasing the commission to be paid them before any deal was put through.

Our arrival at Lwow—pronounced like a pup's bark—in Galician Poland, had been timed to a nicety born of much practice, and an anticipation of what was in store. Therefore, on descending at the Hotel Krakowski, we were greeted by Pawel W——, an old friend and a manufacturer of the veritable Kummel.

Dinner that evening with W—— and his charming fiancée, and coffee afterwards on the balcony, lives in our memory. In the room where we sat were the splashes of bullets that rained about this house during the Terror of the Ukrainian invasion of 1918-1919—the Petlura fiasco. This girl, a child then, had lived through it; had lived for months in cellars, creeping out at night to forage for food, then back while the contest raged between the forces dividing the city.

Lwow was saved by dauntless women. Our hosts told us of how these women fought from house to house and, helped by the "Eaglets"—the girl and boy scouts—won back the city. How again, in 1920, they dug and manned trenches, and turned back the advancing Bolsheviks. They told of the pain that was, but which has now passed away; for Lwow is again a gay city. Placed on the crossways joining East to West, it has oriental colour in its life, and the mark of western ideas in its buildings and institutions. There is the Kilinski park, and there are nightingales; art galleries and three cathedrals. There is also the culture of the university with its lively society,

whilst here is the centre of Galicia and the oilfields, from which one may understand why invaders came to wrest the city from the new Poland.

Lwow's final claim on the interest of the traveller is that crude oil was first distilled here in 1853—and by a Polish chemist. So let us remember Lwow every time we replenish our petrol tanks.

We stayed a day at Lwow, learning much of its wonderful history, dating from the time when the Ruthenians built it as a fortress against the inroads of the Tartars, by whom it was burnt and plundered, being again set up by Casimir the Great, in 1332, when it finally became a flourishing city under Polish rule. It has been successively taken and retaken by various conquerors. The Turks were prominent in looting; Cossacks descended upon the city, and, in the last phase, the Austrians came, during the first half of the XIX century, with harsh rule and autocratic procedure. Some fifty years ago Galicia, with its capital Lwow, was granted a form of self-government, and was able to assume something of a prosperous air.

On its more human side perhaps, the fish market of Lwow can claim a certain notoriety. Most of the fish are alive and placed in tubs and receptacles, and a customer chooses his meal according to the size and agility of the fish. This system is the local substitute for cold storage, and enables the fishmonger to carry forward his stock from day to day without the risk of its becoming unsaleable.

With unknown roads before us and a frontier to cross, before reaching Cernauti (Czernowitz) we made an early start next morning, but not so early as to prevent our host insisting on breakfast at his mansion, and that he should give us cooked food for that lunch-basket. Here, at his advice, deserting the A.A. itinerary for the first and last time on the whole tour, we avoided the direct road to Stanislawow, because of its condition; making a circuit via Mikolajow and Styrj. Here for the first time too, there was rain, but this could not spoil the sheer delight

of skimming over the good gravelled road, and mounting up towards the great Carpathian chain stretching for hundreds of miles. There were dense forests about us, and many splashing streams, the head waters of the mighty Dniester. Not far away was Przemyśl; a name familiar, if unpronounceable, in Britain during the Dark Days; but here, more than a name.

This part of the Carpathians is called the Eastern Beskids, whose peaks rise to 5,000 feet. In one group, the Berszady, are the Bojki, Ruthenian mountaineers, and their straw-thatched wooden huts are most picturesque. Near Styrj and Skole are beautiful wooden churches, each with several squat towers of Byzantine form, rising in tiers. To the east of this, and just south of our road, are the mysterious Gorgany Mountains. These are wild and inaccessible heights; without habitation, paths, or shelter, they are a relic of primeval nature unspoiled by man.

Farther east again one finds a most original race, the Hucules, living within the valleys hidden between the spurs. These peasant mountaineers are of splendid physique and, dressed in their extraordinary gala costumes, a sight worth more than a day's march to see. The primitive customs and rich artistry of the Hucules have brought them notoriety throughout eastern Europe. It is a matter for speculation how this tribe of the Ruthenian family have successfully retained their unique characteristics against the waves of conquering invaders that have swept so often against their valleys, submerging stronger races.

Two things learned by experience of motoring in romantic Poland and through the Balkans, are that English serves surprisingly often, and that the American dollar is mighty, in fact, is the second currency, and came into use during the period of inflation and collapse of the Polish mark. The English spoken invariably has a tang of Chicago or New York. "An'-thing I kin du for youse fellers?" enquired a ragged derelict at Stanislawow, finding us stopped and consulting the map. Like

thousands of others, he had emigrated to America before the war, saved a little money, had come home, and later found that the quota system barred his return to America. Then, drifting to poverty and learning shiftlessness, the desire to get back to America and heavy work died. "Yes, tell us where we can get a cup of coffee," we replied. He led us to it and, sitting a little apart, accepted cigarettes and a dollar bill with an indifference acquired elsewhere. The café proprietor received American currency without question and gave us zloty in change.

With a few dollars tucked away in the depths of the wallet, one can pay the score in any town or village from Warsaw to Macedonia. Ask a Pole the number of zloty there are in a certain amount of sterling and he will convert pounds into dollars and these to zloty.

We accepted the rather modest hospitality of the hotel at Stanislawow and spent hours exploring this romantic countryside. Only a few kilometres to the east lay the Dniester, which waters a valley populated by Ruthenian peasants wearing the picturesque national costumes, and traverses impressive gorges and ravines. Ethnographically this is one of the most interesting districts of Poland. One sees a patch of colour in a field, and approaching, discerns a group of workers dressed in reds and oranges, showing vividly against the surrounding natural tints. They are gathering in the harvest, and, beside the levelled grain, there will be children playing or engaged on some trivial task. Down the road the long carts creak in a never-ending stream; carts laden with hay, or live-stock for the market many kilometres distant.

The trail may be long and straight in Poland, but the scene is ever enlivened by traffic or incident; and hereabouts in south Galicia the people have a cheerful air.

A fast, undulating, gravel road, leads to Kolomea in the valley of the Prut. In thirty-nine kilometres there is Sniatyn, and in four more, the frontier of Romania. Night is falling,

and by all western practice we shall find the frontier barred against us.

Surely and even more certainly this will be our case, here within thirty kilometres of the suspect Ukraine frontier, a place of alarms, spies, and the menace of marauding Bolsheviks—here by the last milestone of civilization.

The officials may assume, we said to each other, that despite our papers we are about no ordinary business, and will order us to await the morning; wait at Sniatyn till morning! What a prospect! And our first experience in this town tended to confirm the fear. Common sense dictated that before dashing down to the frontier, there must be formalities here to be complied with. So we sought the Prefecture. Closed! And while we waited, discussing the dilemma, there gathered a curious crowd, which would have charmed in any other circumstances. Just now it irritated us, in our fatigue, hunger and embarrassment. Peasants grouped closely round us in long white tunics, like nightshirts, to their knees, round straw hats, sleeveless waistcoats, cummerbunds, cotton trousers and bare feet; dark-haired men and silent. We called out questions. "Where is the douane, the zollamt?" Some pointed to the frontier, others back towards Kolomea. Sickening thought—must we retrace our steps twenty-five miles? The minutes were slipping by. Probably the frontier was actually closing now. We would be too late. Then a Jew boy: "Say—you'll hev to git away back to the deepo." Railway station? Why? Where? He told us, adding it was hard to find in the dark. No, he could not leave his café, but bundled in a worthy and rotund Pole, with no language but his own. He guided us right and left and round about; down dark lanes, with potholes and quagmire. Ten minutes passed. This was preposterous! There must be some misunderstanding. We would go back. The attempt to turn the car round, nearly led to a fight. "Fatty" clutched the wheel; said earnest things loudly in Polish, pointed pleadingly onward. So we gave him another chance—and presently came upon the station.

Here the triptyque was dealt with, a soldier of the frontier guards came forward and accompanied us back through Sniatyn, and on to the elusive frontier. This extra passenger we said, was impossible. The springs would not stand the load. There was no room in the car. We discussed in our unknown tongue a scheme of leading "Fatty" back to the station office and making a dash for it, before he could regain the car. No, that would not be cricket, and anyhow it would not do; the soldier might refuse to get in without him.

In the end the soldier and one of us perched precariously on the luggage, and we moved heavily away towards the town, where "Fatty" descended and, refusing any tip, tried to embrace us in an affectionate farewell.

Arrived at the Polish frontier, there is a quick scrutiny, the gate swings open and we move off, still with our military freight, who refused to go away. Shortly the Romanian barrier looms up. More gates. And now another soldier, a Romanian, stows himself aboard despite protests. Advancing slowly, we catch a beaming official in our headlights. "Here is the telegram from Bucharest," he says delightedly, and introducing himself as the local Pooh Bah presents his visiting card. Up in his office we smoke and talk with politeness and feigned patience. At last the cigarette is finished, the car is rejoined, our friend adds himself to the party and endeavours to climb in. There is a limit to all things! This time we resist! Ours is not a charabanc. The soldiers must walk and we will go slowly. Thus the procession moves off through the night, ultimately to arrive at the station of Nepolocauti, where the Pole takes train back to Sniatyn, and we wait while assembled officialdom duly celebrates our arrival with its rubber stamps. Peasants flit silently about us in the darkness, their white costumes giving them a ghostly appearance. They whisper and shrink back sheepishly when we turn the spot light on them.

All things end somehow, sometime, somewhere. Very late we reach Cernauti. We place the luggage in the hotel, the



A POLISH INN AND ITS PATRONS

Photo Authors



THE VILLAGE LAUNDRY

Photo Authors



ROAD-MENDERS ARE MUCH IN EVIDENCE IN THE NEW POLAND

Photo Authors

car in a garage two miles distant—and walk back to the dinner that will dispel the pessimism in which the events of the past few hours have submerged our soul. This was the thirteenth of August, and by no means our lucky day.

Though Romania is not in the Balkans, she neighbours them and her interests are largely bound up therein. Thus we were now in direct touch with the storm centre of Europe, and it will be of interest to explain concisely and without going into unnecessary detail, what the Balkans are and their significance in European politics.

The term Balkan means a mountain, a Turkish word, and it has become the general designation for these states which are largely mountainous. We were to find how widely different are the interests and aspirations of the inhabitants. Beginning with the days when these wild races were controlled by either Rome or Constantinople, their history is one long record of strife and bitter antagonism, many invaders came and went until the Turks created a form of Balkan empire, and for three hundred years comparative quiet reigned. Then the Turkish power crumbled and fell away, a prey to the disintegrating influences of bribery and corruption, tyranny and misrule, which marked the Ottoman regime, and to the breakaway of the states it had subdued but not assimilated, who fought from political consciousness and finally achieved their independence. The state we had now entered—Romania—after being for so long split into a number of petty principalities, united in 1859, and became an independent nation with the Russo-Turkish war of 1878, when Bulgaria likewise became autonomous. Greece and Serbia had, after great efforts and much fighting, attained the rank and status of separate nations just after the opening of the XIX century.

Then came the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, and the World War, which greatly increased the power and importance of Serbia and Romania, bringing them in as significant European states, and giving to them territory that had formerly been

subject to Austro-Hungarian or Russian authority. It is not within our scope to discuss the new arrangements, nor to say whether they are based on geographical or ethnical grounds, but it is certain that, by some, they are not in any way regarded as the final settlement. The races of the Balkans are diverse and there is no immediate prospect of even a modified form of federation amongst them.

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Such then was the theatre now opened to us, where Romanian and Bulgar, Greek, Albanian, Montenegrin, and Serb stand variously grouped, since the world war brought about so drastic a recast of the map of Europe, in which these smaller nations have been stirred to political consciousness and have entered upon an entirely new phase of national life. They are involved in all manner of local adjustments quite apart from the questions of moment in which the great Powers beyond their borders are closely interested.

The Balkan question, in the variety of the problems and complexities it raises, still remains a menace to the peace of Europe, and the path of diplomacy is set with difficulties, in the adjustment of which so much depends upon the Balkan nations themselves.

The whole political picture is an obscure one and its intricacies are not easy of comprehension. Crises in that turbulent part of Europe have always provoked attention and reaction in continental cabinets, and the respective claims and influences of Teuton and Slav, Moslem and Christian, were prime factors in the international complications of pre-war days and after. The Central Powers and Russia strove for mastery in Balkan councils, but since Russia's tragic fall and the coming of anarchy and chaos as substitute for law and order in the Muscovite empire, the political situation *vis-à-vis* the Balkans has undergone re-orientation.

Now that Europe as a whole is passing through a stage of reconstruction, and efforts are being made to restore the

incalculable damage wrought by the war, the balance in the Balkans is one of compelling interest, for the political and economic state of transition through which they are now moving, exposes them to forces of reactionary and subversive elements at every turn.

In the past we regarded the Balkans as the cradle of wars in Europe, a centre from which might spring at any moment some new surprise, some fresh entanglement, whose elements go to make up war and tumult; just the sort of thing, in fact, that brought about Armageddon.

At the moment there appears to be no cause for anxiety with regard to developments in the Balkans; each of the states is mainly occupied with internal affairs, working out its own economic destiny, and in concentrating on a programme of internal reform which is recognized to be the prelude to prosperity. The conflict between Italy and Yugo-Slavia which early last year threatened to involve international interest, has been avoided; for the time being at any rate, mainly due to the action of Mussolini, and a spirit of conciliation in which all differences, whether national or individual, should be settled.

Although peace is now apparently restored, there will always remain the petty rivalries and jealousies which have in the past been the fountain of discontent and led to wars both internal and general. It is a superhuman task to reconcile conflicting interests; the settlement of certain matters affecting the vital political and economic welfare of rivals gives rise to much acrimonious debate, and even when achieved, may leave a sense of rankling injustice.

The trouble between Italy and Yugo-Slavia over the Albanian and Dalmatian questions has been settled, and now Bulgaria, the smallest of the Balkan States, hampered by the sinister influence of the strong Macedonian revolutionary element in the population, has averted a crisis which threatened to plunge the country into war, whilst Greece with its coalition government has overcome the internal strife clogging its path,

and successfully concentrated on financial reform of which the country stands in pressing need. Like the Germans, the Greeks are now determined to stabilize their currency, and when finance and monetary matters have been solved they can turn to the question of whether Greece shall be republic or monarchy, and if proportional representation is to displace the majority claim.

In the course of our travels in Rumania it was apparent that a great effort is being made toward establishment of a sound and impartial régime, free from intrigue and prejudice, and the changes in that country are in the direction of progress and continued stability.

As regards Yugo-Slavia, the last of the Balkan States which we visited, this is not only the largest, but the wealthiest in point of resources, both mineral and agricultural, and we saw that whole-hearted attempts are in progress to effect unity in the diverse population composing that cosmopolitan country of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

The question of Hungarian territory awarded by the Versailles Conference to neighbouring states, remains vexed. There is undoubtedly a feeling of injustice abroad in Hungary that they have been unfairly treated. We found post-cards distributed throughout the country with a map of Hungary as it was before the war and as it stands at the present day. On these is emphasized the fact that Hungarian territory has been reduced by two-thirds, that the finest of her fertile areas have been taken from her and awarded to the succession states and that, in consequence, many of the industries that were vital to the life of the country have been curtailed and in some cases, apparently checked to the point of extinction. These, and such as these, are the problems confronting Central European and Balkan statesmen at the moment, whose anxieties, therefore, are very real.

In this brief review of the political situation as it was presented to us, we have set out in perspective the picture as it is often drawn, and as a prelude to subsequent investigations

SIDELIGHTS

from which arose a more concrete view with the passage through the various countries concerned, and our meeting with prominent men and officials who control their destinies. Ours was the rôle of observer. We express not a personal view, but what men say and why. We do not attempt to judge rights from wrongs ; being interested solely in learning a little of the things that matter so much to the hospitable peoples amongst whom we passed.

CHAPTER V

ROMANTIC ROMANIA

OUR first sensation on arriving at Cernauti had been of profound relief. We were dog-tired and the lateness of the hour did not conduce to optimism. We had no arrangements for the night and so, when we stumbled across the Hotel Pajura Neagra, it seemed the one bright spot in an otherwise gloomy prospect. There are many worse hotels in Romania, and, possibly, better at Cernauti, but that was beside the point. How could we grumble at the humbleness of the accommodation, when the bedroom for two cost but 364 lei, or four shillings, while the food—if not the coffee—was good?

Despite the fatigues of the day, we made a tour of the streets before turning in; rubbed shoulders with the people, and it was unconscionably late when, with nodding heads, we broke away from chance acquaintances in the café, whose tongues would have wagged all night about their country had we allowed.

Cernauti, or Czernowitz as the Austrians called it when they annexed the Bukovina in 1775, is a busy town with factories working the timber of the magnificent forests of beech that mantle the hill slopes leading up to the Carpathians. The Austrians not inappropriately named this district the Bukovina, which implies "beech" land, as does Buckingham in England. The mighty river Dniester flows thirty kilometres to the north—Cernauti, itself, is on the Prut, which, with the Sereth just over the western hills, are tributaries of the

Danube and water the whole Moldavian plain. One is soon made to realize that this is historic ground, and that here the Romanians made their last stand in December 1917, fighting against long odds, deserted in the hour of their final hope by the army of Red Russia which, having advanced into Galicia with irresistible force had dissolved into nothingness. Indeed, it had broken up into roving bands, plundering the Romanian villages, until ejected at the point of the bayonet.

South-east from where we left Poland lay Bessarabia which came to Romania after the war, but contains a proportion of non-Romanian elements. It is said that some of these are dissatisfied with the transfer, and that the tension there is not relieved by the attitude of the Bolsheviks, who decline to acquiesce in Romanian occupation of Bessarabia and by insidious means, so well-known to them, are working up anti-Romanian feeling. Romania explains the very good reasons why she refuses the suggestion of a plebiscite demanded by Moscow, but her position is precarious from her inability to placate the Bessarabians and establish a popular form of government.

Before passing on, it may be of interest if we outline the old controversy over this territory lying between the rivers Dniester and Prut and bounded on the south by the Danube and the Black Sea. Opening on to the latter, it is the historic highway from east to west; all the conquering hosts from time immemorial have passed over it, down to the days when Russia and Turkey made it their cockpit. Then Russia added it to her dominions in 1812, the inhabitants enjoying considerable local administration in accordance with their own customs. At the same time Russia by colonization by her own people and emigrants from other Slav and Teutonic States, partly denationalized Bessarabia. Then, again, when we fought the Russians in the Crimean War in 1854, the terms of peace forced the Russians back from the Danube by taking from her the south-western part of the area in dispute. As

usual the adjustment was only temporary, and, in 1878, after the Russo-Turkish war, the Congress of Berlin awarded the same region to Russia, allotting to Romania the Dobrudja or delta of the Danube where it enters the Black Sea. For Romania this was poor consolation, seeing that she had assisted the Russians against the Turks and had granted free use of her territory for the passage of Russian troops and material, but she held on her course until, as already seen, she came into possession again, although it is strongly disputed by Moscow which claims Bessarabia to be included in the heritage of the Tsars. If Moscow decided on war for a restoration of her alleged rights, Poland would have to come in by virtue of her treaty with Romania, and Germany might be induced to participate under the terms of the recent agreement with Russia. This would threaten another general conflagration, unless Romanian administration can in the meantime produce a good effect in Bessarabia and so clear away the existing agitation being carried on from Moscow and elsewhere.

The Romanians are more in sympathy with the French and Italians than with the Slavs, which mainly accounts for their siding with the allies in the war rather than with Germany. A decided pro-French sentiment exists throughout the country, and, when disaster overtook the Romanian arms, it was the French who helped to build up the military machine later, induced them to join the Little Entente, and paved the way to the alliance with Poland. Thus France has been continually at the side of Romania in the recent past.

* * * *

On leaving Cernauti we entered a phase of our journey which, for grandeur of scenery and beauty of peasant costume, it would be difficult to surpass. The route took us over the Carpathians and through Transylvania. It was Sunday and all were in their best. The roads were often good; the sun shone gloriously and never was there such wonderful motoring.



Photo Authors

THROUGH THE WONDERLAND OF THE CARPATHIANS

By staff work the night previous we had paid the bill and trusted the ancient driver of the local droshky to appear with his curricula at 5 a.m. and drive us to the distant garage, whose proprietor had promised the car should be ready. The plan broke down at the outset, for the bedroom door would not open. How should we get out when the door lock, a gigantic thing of mediæval mechanism, refused to respond to the key? Then followed a consultation; the summoning of sleepy menials and a talk through the keyhole in strange tongues and without understanding. All to no purpose, until, tired of its own stale joke, the bolt slid back and we were free. There was no need to apologize to the son of Nimshi for the delay. Breakfastless, we waited his pleasure and eventually reached the garage, where was another check, for no one came to our summons on the door. Through a chink the car could be seen. More thunderous knocks. A long pause. Search for a crowbar to force an entry led us to a pile of old tins and sacking, which suddenly moved, and yielded—the watchman, who yawned, shook the straw from his hair, and tried to collect his wits. Aphrodite, rising from the waves, was not a more welcome sight—though we had no difficulty in concealing the pleasure befitting the occasion by a display of those emotions more natural to Britons delayed.

Conversation languished until the lapse of a bumpy, dusty, fifty kilometres to Siret and breakfast. There is a café at Siret in the main street, on the left, and by a tree, where the serving wench smiled and the coffee, eggs, rolls and butter exceeded anticipation. We may never visit this townlet again, but we place on record that it provides good cheer.

* * * *

Talking of meals brings us back to our luncheon basket.

“To-morrow we will use our luncheon basket,” we said. We had been saying the same thing for many days. We were proud of that luncheon basket. It was not so much a luncheon basket as a universal provider. Anybody wrecked on a desert island with that luncheon basket would have all the comforts

of home. It was packed with food from a full course luncheon to iron rations. We both wanted to play with this super-luncheon basket. Anyhow, we said we did, but at meal-times by some queer coincidence we always found ourselves outside an hotel, café or inn

"As we are here, we may as well have a meal," we used to say, "and to-morrow we will use the luncheon basket." After a time, we lost our enthusiasm for the luncheon basket. We did not actually dislike it, rather we were afraid of it. There it was in the car, a silent reproach, inviting us to play with its bottles, plates, knives, forks, and hot and cold water. "There will come a day" we said, "when caught in a storm, miles from hotels, cafés and inns, we shall be glad of that luncheon basket." At the same time we secretly decided never to be caught in a storm miles from places where they prepare food. Sometimes we showed the luncheon basket to suspicious looking people, but nobody stole it, they just admired it and said what a splendid thing it was to have about the car in case we were starving. Actually they seemed to suggest that we ought to be glad to starve just to give the luncheon basket a chance. Every night we took the luncheon basket out of the car and every morning we put it back again, and throughout the entire journey the thing was only once unpacked and then only in an attempt to break the spell. On the last day we gave the food it contained to a small boy, who was strangely ungrateful.

* * * *

We were now on the main highway which, continuing, leads southward down the valley of the river Siret and always at the foot of the Carpathians to Bucharest. We kept with it only through Suceava, swung west and, after Gura Humorului, commenced to wind among the gorges.

The passage of our car through the hamlets was the cause of much interest. The friendly folk of the hills saluted us, and sometimes in a lonesome valley we would pause at a stony stream perhaps, or in some shade of pines. Peasants

would approach and we tested their nationality by asking direction to a town on our route. If our enquiry for "Sighisoara" brought no response, that meant the peasant was not a Romanian. If "Segesvar" failed, he was not a Hungarian, and when he recognized "Schassburg" we knew he was Saxon.

There are racial complexities in Great Romania, as the kingdom now calls itself, but the country is emerging from the difficulty of reconciling the conflict of interests.

We entered this land of romance which stands between the modern civilization of the west and the mediæval tone of the east, anticipating that we would experience rare sensations. We were not mistaken.

The Romanians have a history confused by successive invasions and countless wars. Through all this they have retained the characteristics of the original Dacians and of the Romans, from whom the main stock traces descent.

It was in A.D. 46—under Augustine—that the Roman Eagles first appeared, coming by Tiberius's great road, but later Domitian had to admit defeat by the great Dacian ruler, Decebalus. In A.D. 101 Trajan decided that the territory must be subjugated, and made it his life work to accomplish this aim, realizing that possession of the great Carpathian mountains was necessary to his empire if he were to solve the Germanic problem. His triumph lasted until, in A.D. 270, Aurelianus had to withdraw his army, and leave the country to the Goth invaders, and the colonists and peasants isolated from the close intellectual contact they had enjoyed with the influence and culture of western civilization. There remained only the Christianity which Rome had brought and old Romania became a buttress for the Faith against the heathen hordes. For hundreds of years afterwards the people were subject to the ravages of Vandal, Goth, Tartar and Slav, and Attila's Huns sweeping over Asia trampled Romania and the Balkan States in their merciless stride. Then, in the XIV century came the Turks, under

whose dominion the country remained until these were defeated in 1877-8 by the Russians, aided by Romanian forces.

In 1848 there had been a revolution of the younger generation of the aristocracy, inspired by French democratic ideals, which brought Romania again into closer touch with Western Europe—since when the country has been modelled on Western constitutional lines.

When the Great War began, Romania was induced to take part in the struggle while still completely isolated from the Western allies. It was in 1916. The moment was inopportune, and caught in the relentless grip of the Central Powers, and of Turkey and Bulgaria, Romania, deserted by Russia, was overwhelmed, the capital occupied, her armies penned in Moldavia and the rest of the country overrun. Eventually she was compelled to conclude a separate peace of a humiliating nature. Then came the victory of the Allies, and for Romania the rewards promised when she entered the War.

Passing through the Carpathians we came at last to Campulung at an altitude of 3,000 feet and then began a great climb with the road rising in *lacets* for twenty kilometres. The gradients were engineered by the skill of some master-mind. Soon begins the deep gorge that, continuing for forty kilometres, leads through to Bistrita. Here are gaunt crags and steep slopes carrying immense forests, where lurk bear and wolves which, when the winter snows are deep, steal hungrily forth in search of prey. Had we met any wolves we could easily have escaped by throwing them our luncheon basket; it would have kept the wildest wolves quiet for hours. Away to the south and north were peaks lifting to 6,000 and 7,000 feet and all the foreground a succession of lesser hills with enticing valleys between them.

Around a bend we encountered a party of Tzigane, crouched by the road-side, and soon experienced to the full their desire for backsheesh! It would be difficult to imagine more debased outcasts than these nomads. In Romania the gypsy

serves only for the most menial tasks; for those that no Romanian will undertake. Truly they are the untouchable. The women were clad in no compliance with modern convention, the younger children were naked, the older wearing a shirt, and the men in rags. Their hair long and unkempt, they clamoured round the car, cupidity, and perhaps hunger, lighting their swarthy faces and brilliant black eyes. The younger girls were really splendid creatures, with a savage beauty which, when still, would have proved a study for the artist. They marry when mere children and soon their beauty fades, but as it goes so does their authority among their people increase. Despised, and ever on the move, the nomadic gypsies of Romania—a numerous host, are a continual source of trouble to the Government. They pass the frontier in mysterious ways. They are here to-day and vanished by the morrow; perhaps with someone else's movable assets. The Tzigane of Romania and Hungary, the Gitano of Spain, the Zingari and other Romany tribes, speaking similar dialects, owing their origin to peoples of India and Persia but now scattered around the world, are a greater puzzle than the Jew.

One must hear the music of the Tzigane to know what the violin is capable of yielding. One may listen to a party of these born musicians playing without score, in concert with their leader, creating lovely harmonies no matter what intricacies he may practise or what his whim. Gradually the music rises. Louder and louder, faster and more wild until the band and the audience are strung up to the limit of intensity. As quickly comes an *andante* movement. Then silence—and applause.

The origin of the gypsy has always been open to speculation; by some we are told they come from Hindustan and the empire of the Moghuls, others that they travelled slowly across Asia from the Far East, until they reached the countries now known as the Balkans and there found a resting place which time has conferred upon them as the headquarters of the race in Europe.

The gypsies themselves know very little of their origin ; there are those amongst them who declare that they came in the ages long past and gone, from a country called Egypt, but the latter as a land of origin has been denied them from the fact that their own tongue and the many dialects of Egypt are totally at variance. They will tell you that the gypsy advance-guard followed the Jews in their migration from the land of the Pharaohs, and there may be an element of truth in this for does not the Old Testament say, when speaking of the Jews, "and a mixed multitude went up also with them," but of that mixed multitude nothing further is related when the Jews had parted company with them and had passed on their way.

So far as historical records go the gypsies first appeared in Europe in the XV century, and within thirty years of their advent had spread themselves over the entire continent. They came in through Rumania and the Carpathian Mountains, the vanguard representing themselves as pilgrims from the east and under that guise they posed for nearly a hundred years. Then when strongly entrenched and feeling secure in their position, they embarked on methods of gaining a living which have characterized the genus ever since ; it led to measures of restraint and expulsion, but in spite of efforts made by various states to rid their land of the gypsy element, they continued, and the most drastic rules and regulations failed to root them out. In France the king who had entertained Henry VIII on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, directed that they should be evicted by fire and sword, Denmark ordained that every magistrate should take them into custody, they were denied access to the Low Countries on pain of death, and the Germans, under the impression that they were Turkish spies would not allow them to reside or even to pass through their territory. But despite the edict of German and Dutch, Spaniard and Frenchman, the gypsy weathered the storm and to-day there is not a country in Europe that has not its quota of gypsies.

Wherever found, their manners and customs and the cast of

feature are of general similarity. Their occupations remain the same ; they are horse dealers, fortune-tellers, beggars, musicians and strolling players ; they cheat and lie as glibly on the Romanian uplands as they do on Epsom Downs, and they roam up and down the country without settled habitation, organized purpose, or well-defined objective, as much at home in the north of England as they are on the Spanish sierras.

As for religion they seem to have none at all ; we could not ascertain that they possessed settled beliefs ; any ideas of definite profession or faith are as remote as those on definite homes or settlement.

Here, in their semi-permanent home, seventy miles north of the Romanian capital, we found the gypsy as he has existed almost since the dawn of history, cut off from his fellow men, child of nameless descent, shunning the society of others, and wishing only to be left free and unfettered to carry on the tricks of thief and sorcerer, of fortune telling and deceit, of life without labour, passing his days in superstition and trading on the credulity of others. Nevertheless, the gypsies have their good points. They hold the horse in great affection and will not eat the flesh of that animal, and it is not unusual, if a gypsy has occasion to divorce his wife, for his horse to be sacrificed at the same time, as the sign that the greatest calamity has overtaken him and his caste.

In all the arts and crafts of the pickpocket and the counterfeiter they are expert. We heard of one who within a space of fifteen minutes produced from an old silver pot, a crucible and some implements that he carried in a bag, a number of silver pieces that were accepted as the genuine coinage—at any rate in a Romanian village where possibly they are more easily beguiled than in England.

Though the gypsies interested us profoundly, our main business was with Romania and the Romanians, and the twain are an impressive study. Prior to the war the Romanian population was equal only to that of London, but it has risen to a total of eighteen millions through the addition

of Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia. In Transylvania is a mixed population and large numbers are scattered through the Balkans whose origin still lacks scientific determination. There are many elements, notably the Saxons of Transylvania whose history goes back to the eleventh century and who brought with them Germanic culture and ideals and still show evidence of contact with the German Fatherland; politically so remote. This element although long under Austro-Hungarian sovereignty has adjusted itself to the new conditions. There can be no doubt that in this Germanic stock of Transylvania, the Romania of to-day, will find valued industry, and intelligence on a par with the material resources of the new territory she has acquired.

In Transylvania one comes across Magyar settlements with problems which centre more on the attitude towards minorities in Transylvania, rather than on the actual demarcation of the frontiers by the treaties, although it cannot be denied that in Hungary one hears a great deal about the injustice as the outcome of the Treaty of Trianon. Fortunately it was not our business to judge these things, but one must know of their existence to get the best value out of a motor tour round Europe. Scenery is not everything.

The homeland of the various sections of the Romanian State is as varied as the people; in the course of our journey we traversed mountain and forest, plain and marshland, the open country and the rocky heights of the Carpathians, and found a wealth of resources that few lands can surpass. It is said that Romania can produce every commodity except rubber and cotton; its wheat supply was one of the attractions to the Central Powers in the war, whilst its oil wells are famous. The methods of mineral exploitation are sometimes crude; we met with peasants who still wash gold from the hillside on the primitive lines followed in the days of Trajan.

Bistrita is the northern point of the Saxon clans of Transylvania. Here was the outpost, with the Castle of Hunyadi Janos, capping the hill, to hold the invader who



Photo Authors

A LITTLE VILLAGE BELLE



Photo Authors

TYPES BY THE WAY



Photo : Authors

LADS OF THE VILLAGE



Photo Authors

THE SHEEP FOLLOW HIS PIPING

endeavoured to enter from the Eastern world. This was where the caravan road halted, before winding down to the plains. Bistrita has seen much traffic of armies up and down the centuries; the alarms, sounded on great horns, have wakened the echoes of the valleys and brought the scattered peasantry scurrying for refuge within the castle keep.

All was peace the day we passed—peace and colour. It was Sunday and the lads and lasses were arrayed in ravishing finery. The Romanian peasant's work-a-day costume is unsurpassed for simple artistry. Bell-mouthed sleeves; bodice embroidered and gathered at the neck, a single piece of striped material over a white skirt, kilted at one side and held at the waist by a broad twist of gay fabric; this, and for the head a white kerchief caught behind, completes the dress. Nothing could be less ornate, yet it is perfect as adornment—especially when clothing the beautiful maidens of Romania.

This is the week-day dress. Imagine then the splendour of the costumes reserved for festivals! Then the finest pieces of embroidery and stitchery are unfolded and used to deck these beauty-loving people. It seemed to us that each village had its own select uniform. In one village the dress was entirely black, relieved with white. In another the girls had straw hats—fifteen inches across—with crowns so small that they rested perched on the heads, with long streamers behind. At another the men wore little felt hats, black tunics and white petticoats near to the ankles, and high boots. Perhaps these were Magyars. In yet another village there were groups of well-built men in high boots, tight white trousers, long linen jumpers, leather embroidered belts six inches wide, and the most rakish of curate hats. These were the “*moti*” of old Dacian stock. Sometimes in villages where the races have intermarried, the Saxon dress has been influenced by Romanian love of colour. It is then one sees those curate hats decked with flowers and the white tunics covered by heavily embroidered waistcoats.

A village dance is a delightful affair. Organized by some leader, the fun proceeds merrily. The girls with floral decoration and the men in their Sunday best move with a will. There are no "wall-flowers." To the tune of the Tzigane fiddle the Hora begins, and soon the whole company has joined hands and are "treading" the measure, circling faster and faster in delirious abandon, until suddenly the music ceases, the dancing ends. In some of the dances the couples give themselves up to the passion of the moment, swayed by the compelling strains of the gypsy's violin.

We and the car made a deep impression at Reghinul-Sas, where we were received, not so much as tourists, as explorers. The natives might not have seen anything like us before, by the way they kept on telling each other of this strange thing that had happened to them. We could not understand a word of their language, which was perhaps as well, for their comments sounded as free as their inspection was thorough. They wanted to see more of us and, as we entered an attractive inn, most of the population of the place seemed to be inviting us courteously to join them. They talked, and we listened and kept on looking hungry. We said 'food' in all the languages we knew, but they seemed to think we were making funny noises to amuse them, for they laughed heartily and dug each other in the ribs. We pointed to our mouths, and the natives applauded, and sat up expectantly, apparently waiting for more funny business. But we stopped the variety entertainment and set out to find a kitchen to which we were drawn by the appetizing odour of simmering soup.

The kitchen was full of women and girls all of whom screamed as one, and then they, too, began to tell each other what they thought about us. We told them we wanted eggs boiled, and we tried to demonstrate the boiling of an egg. We maintain that giving a convincing imitation of a boiling egg is beyond the power of human ingenuity. So we tried to make a sound like soup with the result that several of the women began to look anxious. Fortunately, some of the men, who

followed us into the kitchen, realized that we were just hungry travellers, not public entertainers, and soon we were enjoying a hearty meal of bread and eggs and soup cooked in an open hearth. We sat at a rough deal table, and found that bottles of wine and pouches of tobacco served better than mere words to establish a warm friendship with the honest, hard-working natives who manifested a childlike interest in our car and belongings.

We showed them the engine and a map of Europe, and eventually they grasped the fact that the car had brought us from England and then some of them sent for their distant cousins to hear the wonderful news. What seemed to puzzle them was the noiselessness of the motor. They could hardly credit that it was running, and some put their ears to the radiator listening to the revolutions as a child listens to the ticking of a watch. For their further edification we glided off in top gear and high spirits, to the sound of hearty farewells, until a bend in the road shut us out of their lives, but not them out of our memories.

Romania is a synopsis of European history from Roman times. As to the geologist each strata of rock denotes an era of time and tells its story, the building of the Kingdom of Romania may be traced by its peoples and their languages and customs. Thus the white linen costume is reminiscent, even though it may not be directly attributable, to the toga the Romans wore when they possessed the land. The language, too, is a genuine Romance tongue, and in the arts the influence of conquerors from east and west is easily discerned. Each Romanian village can boast an individuality in ballads and lore, legends and tales, as distinct as its dress. Passing through the Carpathians one stumbles across evidences of this, apparent even to the uninitiated tourist.

One day, in a wide valley we met a little shepherd boy—all in white—a child of ten, perhaps. He was leading his sheep to a tune on his pipe—as in ancient days. A jolly wee chap, this, who took delight in posing for a photograph, showed us

his sheath-knife with the enthusiasm of a Western youngster, and the same boyish joy, on receiving a coin to add to the miscellany in his pouch.

For the whole of its length through Transylvania the road climbs and falls, only to rise tortuously again, and often sharply. This had been a highway of great military importance to Austria-Hungary, traversing laterally the whole length of the Carpathians from north to south, serving every mountain pass and connecting the points of vantage. Great speed is not possible, nor would one desire it with so much to claim the whole attention of the passenger, and that little which the driver dare afford from his task of avoiding the pitfalls by the way.

Our hope, based on simple arithmetic and rule of three, had been to make Brasov a stopping place for one night and to sleep in this ancient Saxon town, with dreams of the great castle above us and of its ancient glory. Actually, however, we had to realize that there was nothing for it but to decide on Sighisoara as the farthest we could travel.

We asked the first person we met the way to an hotel. We assured him that it need not be a first-class hotel, not even a large hotel, and we were not a bit particular about hot and cold water in the bedrooms. We told him as nicely as we could without hurting his feelings, that we could see that Sighisoara was not the sort of place where one would expect to find a modern hotel complete with golf links. What we wanted was a nice little hotel with clean sheets on the bed and, if possible, clean linen on the table. Did he know of such an hotel? He looked at us, he looked away and passed on. Said we, with some dignity, "We will find an hotel for ourselves," and we went through dark and tortuous streets telling each other every few minutes that the hotel was sure to be round the next corner, but instead of finding one we lost ourselves. Then we said we did not want any hotel, it would be much nicer to sleep in the car and immediately we found ourselves standing outside the only hotel in the place.

Somebody must have put it there when we were not looking.

We went into the hotel hurriedly before it was moved but the concierge tried to push us out. "I have no room, I have no bed, I am desolated. I am alone. I cannot go. You must not stay here. Where shall you sleep? I do not know."

We thought he was giving a lesson in simple French, but his imagination and vocabulary worked more rapidly with some lei as lubrication.

Furtively he slipped into the street, warned the hotel to be a good hotel until he returned, entered the car and guided us through a maze of tunnels, lanes, alleys, and what seemed to be other people's backyards and front gardens, and finally, with a gesture of triumph, stopped at what he said was an inn.

The host, he said, would receive us with joy. Then, giving us a strange look that seemed suspiciously like compassion, he vanished completely.

The inn was not a nice inn. It did not look nice nor did it smell nice. A man came out and asked us in Romanian what we were looking at. At least, we thought that was what he said, and we told him we thought we were looking at an inn. It was not an inn, it was an insult. He kept on saying things in Romanian, and we requested him not to worry as we had not any intention of further intruding ourselves on his company. Firmly we started to say "good-night" with the intention of driving through the night and taking rest by turns, when suddenly there arrived an angel with a transatlantic voice.

She "guessed" we'd better see the room, "reckoned" we'd accept and "calculated" we were mutts to waste the lovely mountains by passing through them in the dark, as we had suggested. Angel had been born and reared in this "P'il bourg" and, with her daughter, had arrived back a week ago to revisit her old home. That week had destroyed any illusions which romance and recollection had cherished. Angel was going to beat it for U.S.A. just so soon as she could—but before going would show us the accommodation.

Entering under an arch, we were led up rickety stairs and on to a gallery around the courtyard, with rooms opening off it. We accepted the inevitable.

Two problems remained, the more pressing being a perch for the car. The other was food. The car was full of luggage. "Will it be safe under the arch?"—"Yes," interpreted Angel. "Will the boss accept responsibility for the movable property it contained?"—The answer was very negative. That decided us—we would fare forth and waste no more time. Then Angel had an inspiration. There was a huge Alsatian dog on a long chain at the end of the yard. Place the car within its ambit and no robber dare touch anything! And so the matter was disposed.

At last a square meal was within sight; and Angel joined us. With her was the daughter who had gone to bed, but got up, dressed, and joined us for the sake of hearing the English tongue again. Never were there two such homesick women, and yet one of them was in her home town. She found the place intolerable. Old friends were friends only in name. All that there had been in common between them was lost. Twenty years in the New World had raised the outlook of the emigrant and she found herself unable to stoop to the level from which she had risen. How "these peasants"—spoken with no contemptuous implication—could submit to the conditions under which they lived, why they did not improve their state, were a puzzle to her. Here was a country with great resources and an intelligent people. Why, why. . . .

Our inability to make Brasov for the night had upset our calculations, and we were faced with the necessity of paying for our dalliance by having to accomplish some 200 miles next day—and this before noon; at which hour we had a definite appointment in Bucharest. This had been made before we left London and, now, it was too late to change it. And so we paid our score of 262 lei—in dollars—overnight, rose at three a.m. and crept down as noiselessly as the creaking boards permitted. But our approach to the car was the signal



Photo Authors

A ROMANIAN VILLAGE IS A SIGHT ON SUNDAYS



Photo Authors

THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINEERS WERE DELIGHTED WITH OUR CAR

for Cerberus. His job was to keep people away from the car and he meant to do it. Giving full throat, he barked and snarled; dashed to the limit of his chain—which we prayed was strong—heading us off whichever way we manœuvred. The situation would have been ludicrous under other circumstances. At last, by keeping together we enticed the beast round the back of the car and then one of us slipped quickly and with amazing courage to the other side and bounded in. The dog's wrath was terrible. He bit at the tyres but we salvaged our property despite him and without more to do. As the Arab proverb says:—"Dogs bark—the caravan passes."

Within one hundred yards a tyre went flat—our first puncture in 2,838 miles—if puncture it was and not the work of the hound's teeth.

To have travelled this great distance and now to creep out of Sighisoara like a thief in the night, without seeing even the walled citadel, its turrets and battlements, save in silhouette against the starlit sky, is a humiliating fact for which there may be reason but never excuse. Guarding the valleys leading to Transylvania, this mediæval town is a place wherein to linger in enjoyment of its unspoiled beauty—or so we had been told. Wherefore the regret at the abruptness of our departure remains indelible.

While the one drove, the other slept and then the most wonderful dawn crept thinly through the valleys, piercing the mist till presently high forests and peaks stood forth, enlarged beyond their own great size; showing in outline, first, but soon a picture complete in the blaze of sunlight.

Arthur, anxious that his sleeping companion should not miss this picture of primitive beauty woke him and asked, "What do you think of that?" The awakened one told him in few well chosen words that adequately described the scenery, the morning, and the driver's mental capacity; and then promptly went to sleep again with the remark that the only scenery he wanted to view was breakfast.

Brasov was just stirring as we drove in—but only just—and there was a vacuous pause before breakfast could be obtained. When it came, what more could man want than those new rolls and fresh coffee in the sun outside a café in the old market place?

To-day, there is so much remaining of the past, that it is easy to recreate, in imagination, the life and labour of cities which flourished in the middle ages; and this is the case with Brasov, which retains the true Saxon flavour of its founders, as the blue eyes and flaxen hair of the passers-by serve to demonstrate. "Brasov" sounds unconvincing, but what of the old name "Kronstadt"? Does not that conjure up a picture of clanking Teutonic knights, challenges, alarms, the trumpet call and then the song of the Christian steel against pagan scimitar? There was much went to banish dullness from the life of a border stronghold. Brasov is proud of its past, and can still boast of what it retains. The Renaissance Town Hall, the Black Church and balconies hung with the priceless carpets of Ladik and Shiraz in Persia, were ample reward for our early start.

The town no sooner left, than the conquest of the Predeal Pass begins. A credit to the engineers, this road, if not to those who tend to-day to its surface or those others who zigzagged the railway across it, to the confusion of the careless driver. It partners a boisterous stream, the river Temes (familiar sound!), and rises sturdily in even *lacets*, each with its guard walls to reassure the nervous. The Hungarian frontier lay here once, but no longer is there any formality for the motorist. Now we descend until we come upon Sinaia, the Monte Carlo of Rumania and the royal summer residence. Despite the glorious views it had been a fight against drugging sleep for the driver as well as his companion. The scenery won, and perhaps thereby saved us from the catastrophe that must follow even a couple of winks at the wheel on such mountain roads as these. Now we had crept over the edge of Nature's fortress, Transylvania, and were

looking down upon the wide Wallachian plain. We must reach Bucharest by noon ; that is why the memory retains an exaggerated impression of broods of duckling, litters of pigs, and strings of carts obstructing a free exercise of the throttle. There seemed to be no hurrying and bustling by any but ourselves in this beautiful country—except an occasional motor bound for Sinaia, and stirring the dust into a suffocating cloud, that at any time would have been an outrage, but now, in the stifling heat, was insufferable to tired eyes. Potholes became harder to discern, but the car encountered them with an equanimity we could not share. At Campina in the centre of the petroleum district we took in petrol, and at Pleosti, the way being barred by a repair gang, we were diverted into a square with so many exits that the odds were heavy on our taking the wrong one—which we did. But that did not prevent us pulling up at the Athenæe Palace Hotel at Bucharest as the clocks were striking twelve. We had fulfilled our promise !

The loungers on the leafy *Chaussée*—Bucharest's Mall—which resembles closely the Prater at Vienna, had stared in mild curiosity as the travel-stained car passed swiftly with its Union Jack fluttering gaily.

Our slower progress along the city's Regent Street, the *Calea Victoriei*, crowded with droshkies and a throng of pedestrians—attracted more attention, and so we were not entirely unprepared to face the ordeal of a veritable press of idle fellows, who surged around us as we directed the transfer of our baggage safely into the hotel. Then lunch, and the pearly grey caviare of the Danube, with baby sturgeon jellied ; pleasing to the unaccustomed palate. The zenith of content came with *Café Marhgiloman* ; a cunning brew of Turkish coffee with rum added at its infusion—a thing of rare bouquet.

Bucharest sprawls across the River *Dambovitz* at a cross-roads on the Wallachian plain ; an extensive city of 850,000 people, and ever growing. The thermometer stood at nearly

100° when we arrived but five months later it fell, we have been told, to below zero; a not unusual drop; indeed minus thirty-two has been experienced in the city. The summer heat is often relieved when the Austra blows, bringing as it does a cooling breath of dry air, but the winter wind, the Crivet, coming from Russia, can make a veritable Siberia of the streets.

The Bucharestois, however, have a haven of refuge in the Carpathians, and in an afternoon can escape to Sinaia for summer holidays or winter sports. The royal family have made Sinaia the Mecca of the élite.

Here among the spruces, beech, and juniper, there are magnificent heaths, gorges, torrents, and waterfalls, and excellent accommodation for visitors. At the Palace Hotel one may have a room, with private bath, overlooking the Prahova river and a lovely valley.

An air of perpetual holiday haunts Sinaia. Everyone seems care-free. All are seeking pleasure and finding it at the casinos, garden cafés, theatres and entertainments and in the social round. The Queen is constantly to be seen, driving through the district or visiting the *magasins*. The advent of the royal family to Pelisor Castle—situated among the pines within two miles of Sinaia—is the signal for Ministers, Patricians and the Corps Diplomatique to move up from Bucharest. Then the season begins and it goes with a merry swing, which is lacking nowadays in other countries, where no longer there is royalty to act as a focus for society. Whatever its other merits, republicanism fails woefully to add to the gaiety of the nations that practise it.

The boy-king has ample opportunity of developing into a fine man, growing up in the bracing climate of Sinaia, where both the mind and body can expand to match the freedom of the everlasting hills.

Michael—or “Mihai”—is an only child, and withal a bonny lad. He takes his name from the greatest Voivod in the annals of the country, and, in keeping with modern democratic ideas, his education is conducted by a committee

charged with the responsibility of inculcating all that a king should know. A small school has been founded for this purpose, comprising twelve boys of Michael's age, drawn from all classes of the community, aristocratic and peasant.

Michael's mother, Princess Helena, lives at Castle Peleş, near to which we passed, and has another residence on the Chaussée in Bucharest.

The Queen-Mother Marie, so well-known for her championship of native industry and peasant costume, is a writer of repute, and finds time to be a dog fancier. She is an honorary colonel of the 4th Regiment of Hussars, and is the best known Romanian in the world. Occasionally she is seen at Belgrade, in Yugo-Slavia, when on a visit to her daughter, Queen Mary. Another of her daughters is the ex-Queen of Greece, and yet another is the Princess Ileana, a beautiful girl who is the head of the Y.W.C.A. of Romania. Queen Marie's palace is at Cotroceni, located on a hill near Bucharest.

During our visit we heard much of the three Regents who are deputizing for the boy-King until he reaches years of discretion. The regency is in the hands of Prince Nicholas, assisted by the Metropolitan of the Church and an ex-Chief Justice. Nicholas, named after the Tsar of Russia, was a lively boy, though rather a terror to his parents, brothers and sisters. He was educated at Eton.

One of the keenest automobilists in Romania is this Regent, who finds time when not preoccupied with the task of ruling the kingdom, to participate in the councils of those engaged in the work of improving the amenities of motoring. He is a well-known figure at the motor sports and with his encouragement, these events are most popular. It is one thing to compete in a reliability trial in England, but quite another in Romania, where a course can be set, which for dust, rough going and alpine conditions, and undertaken in blazing summer, will test to the uttermost not merely the mechanical qualities of the car, but also the power of endurance of the occupants.

As one sits at a café table a sporting car may pass with the *éclat* peculiar to that type. At the wheel is Prince Nicholas, who is not afraid to make long journeys alone through the wilds of Romania, since he can rely on personal knowledge of mechanics in case of engine trouble.

British motorists touring Romania will be interested to hear that a remarkable sport is to be had here, that of shooting by automobile. The plan is to go out at night with rifles and shot-guns, and so soon as an animal, be it fox or wolf, comes within view, to turn the spotlight on it and to put out the headlights. As the beast slinks across the road, and perhaps into the fields near by, the driver must follow it bumping over ditches and through scrub—a procedure involving no little risk. Presently it will turn at bay. The duty of one of the party will be to keep its eyes “glinting” in the spotlight. Should the eyes disappear from sight then a sharp note is sounded on the klaxon and its attention again attracted. Meantime the other members of the party leave the car and stalk carefully. With luck they will get to within forty yards and in triumph bring back a good pelt. The wolves are very troublesome in the villages in winter, and it is not unusual to find, on the roadside, a pair of boots and a few buttons, which will be all that is left of some luckless peasant victim.

A motor tour in Romania may be varied by an excursion on a raft on the Bistritsa River. One may make arrangements for a three-days tournée. The sport is full of excitement, for often, when the raft is rushed through defiles it reaches a speed of between twenty and twenty-five miles an hour, and only the skill of the steersman prevents it coming to grief as it runs the gauntlet of the thousands of jagged rocks. The scenery through the gorges is beautiful, and each night the party may camp, and around a fire discuss the thrilling experiences of the day. One may proceed from the Bistritsa into the Moklovia and so into the Sereth and the Danube.

Dust is the bane of motoring and we in Britain can never be sufficiently thankful that our roads are tar-sealed, so as to

MOTORING CONDITIONS

be dust-free. For that reason perhaps one ought to avoid smiling at the "Jazz" costumes worn by foreign motorists. After sampling their roads, we affirm that tight-buttoned dust-coats, helmets and tinted goggles are essential to comfort. The dust is not merely disagreeable; it has a deteriorating effect on the mechanism of the car and affects the life of the moving parts of the engine unless an air filter be attached to the carburetter.

An economist may explain, for it is not apparent, why and how of all countries in Europe, excepting perhaps a few in the west, Romania purchases so many cars. But it is surely beyond even his wit to discover better garages than those of Bucharest. We were shown over one, complete with underground storage for a fleet of cars, with machine and paint shops, smithy, fitting shops, test benches, and other special equipment. "I have plans for a building of three stories with 400 lock-ups" said the director. "Money is the difficulty, of course. One must pay about thirty per cent. interest, to get it," he added. He has since arranged the necessary finance and the work of erecting this edifice is being pressed forward. The expansion of automobilism in Romania is a sign of the times; it presages a motorized Europe and an era of great highways. We may forecast that here, in far Eastern Europe, the tide of motoring will not only open up the country but bring about an early improvement in the roads, the tourist sharing the benefit of this result—of which to a large extent he is the cause. There are giants in the motor industry in Bucharest and one would have to go far to find men of clearer perception of the future of automobilism than they. We found G. and M. and that trojan D. were determined that we should not depart from the city with a single wish unsatisfied. For us, they left their affairs derelict, loaded us with attentions and conjured up government officials who, in turn, discovered cabinet ministers—and this despite the recess, with the town in August a desert. Of them be it said that they nobly upheld the Romanian tradition of hospitality.

Few cities in the world present such a cosmopolitan and colourful stream of life as Bucharest, the "City of Joy." Sometimes east and west do meet ; they meet and mingle in this city of the plain. Jostling the well-dressed citizen and the smart officers, magnificently garbed, are peasants from the hills and surrounding villages, each in his local costume. With the true Roman type, there will be the Slav, Saxon, and Asiatic, Bulgar, Albanian and Serb. A white figure will pass, shuffling under pannier-loads of melons. A dark skinned woman, in brilliant colours, is selling paprika, of a hue more vividly red than her apparel. Here are arrogant gypsy beggars, Jews and itinerant vendors of strange wares. There, mingling with the stream of fine motor cars, are ox carts, pack ponies, droshkies, taxis, electric trams, motor buses. And at night the life of the city ebbs and flows until a late hour. Bucharest is easily in the first flight among the gay out-of-doors cities of the world.

Seated at a café we had an excellent peep-show of a scene of kaleidoscopic change, with absorbing contrasts and novel incidents. With a local friend at our elbow, to point this and that, to explain and comment, the little intimate things were discerned, which, alone, we would have missed. To dine beneath the trees, festooned with lights, in the cool of the evening after the intense heat of an August day, with Tzigane orchestra and pleasant company, is not easily forgotten. We remember such an episode well ; and also what followed at an open-air theatre, when a sudden thunderstorm broke and a deluge, descending, started a rush for cover, which as the chairs went over and people fell, nearly became a disaster. It left us soaked to the skin—all in a moment.

The Birjari of Bucharest are an interesting study and if it were not that they are a deeply religious sect with only two objects in life—their fanatical religion and droshky-driving, it is probable that these vehicles would disappear from the streets. They belong to the sect of the Muscali which fled from Russia to escape persecution by Peter the Great, and practise



Photo Authors

THE GYPSY QUEEN



Photo Authors

A ROMANY WEDDING IN ROMANIA

A FANATICAL SECT

certain curious rites or customs which the tourist will learn about at Bucharest, but which would not be in place in these pages. They are eccentrics. Also they are vegetarians, yellow-haired, and altogether curious. They are comfortable looking men, and are an impressive sight wearing their long blue plush coats, wrapped with a red sash. They are most straightforward, and always have the best horses. Some of their religious ceremonies are extraordinary. There is drinking of spiced tea, followed by dances which work them up into a state of greatest religious frenzy. It is part of their religion to limit the number of children of a marriage to one only.

After a memorable sojourn at Bucharest we left in the afternoon for Giurgiu on the Danube which forms the frontier between Romania and Bulgaria, being accompanied by Mr. G. of the Foreign Office, who spoke perfect English and had the air and bearing of Oxford an don.

The roads in southern Romania need attention ; often it is a case of out of one pothole and into the next, but the people and the land are of never failing interest. There are quaint cottages where the peasants grind the maize from which they make a form of semi-solid porridge flavoured with mamaliga, taking the place of bread, and with them it is the national dish. Then there are the vineyards ; most families possess at least one although it may be only of tiny proportions, but as wine is the national beverage the peasant sees to it that he has the wherewithal to supply his own cellar direct from the garden. The harvest takes place in the late summer and when we were there they had already commenced the gathering in.

It is an event of the year ; each cottager helps the next, and when the succulent grapes are finally gathered and the harvest is at an end, the occasion is celebrated by singing and dancing, everyone entertaining his neighbour as was customary in the good old days in our own land. It is a wonderful fruit country ; from the plums they brew Tuica, a form of brandy both tasty and potent. In colour it is white and reminded us of Kirsch,

or the Russian vodka which on occasions is strong and fiery.

Peter, when acting as British representative in Central Asia a few years ago, was presented with a keg of vodka. He still talks of that liquor with respect. "It was not so much a drink as an explosive," he says. "One sip and you thought you had swallowed a dose of molten lava flavoured with a dash from the cauldron of Macbeth's witches." To drink it he was unable, to throw it away he was ashamed, but Peter had an inspiration. He poured it into the tank of a motor bicycle the engine of which immediately developed extraordinary power. "It was the only time I have ever seen a drunken bicycle," he remarked reflectively. One wonders what rate of duty our Chancellor would charge on this form of motor spirit!

In this southern part of Rumania the type of people gives evidence of the old Romans, with the famed Roman nose, dark complexion, the dark flashing eyes and raven tresses, to say nothing of the lithe and graceful figure. The costumes are picturesque to a degree, with embroidery of every colour and handworked in the manner peculiar to the Rumanian countryside. You can see the peasants weaving the material, whether it be silk, cotton, or flax, and there is a certain mystery about the designs. These are of all patterns, in which the influence of east and west plays a part, but none can tell whence they originated. In some families an exclusive design is handed down through the generations as a family heirloom, and the daughter when she marries takes it as part of the marriage contract.

Old custom and tradition meet one at every turn. In more advanced communities the dress of women varies with the vagaries of fashion, it changes almost from day to day, but here although it may vary in colour it does not alter in design. A couple of centuries and more ago the long chemises came down to the ankles, the upper part was covered with embroidery in silk or cotton, according to the status of the wearer; to-day they are the same. The skirt, too, worn above it, or perhaps

in two panels, one in front and the other behind, is of the same style and pattern as of yore, with embroideries that are often a dream of beauty.

* * * *

As we sped southward to the Danube, which is the Bulgarian frontier, the people were at work in the fields or the cottage garden, the women with a distaff of wool which they constantly spin. There was an Eastern touch about them, for they carry loads and bring water from the well, like Rebecca of old, with jars upon their heads; and the young and handsome ones are goodly to look upon.

In the past the existence of good wells determined location of the early settlements and about these have grown up the *sat* (village) and *catun* (hamlet). Many of them border the road to Giurgiu and, indeed, great care was necessary to avoid the numbers of peasants crowding the roads. They are as tolerant as the patient oxen they drive, and of a temper so equable that, for all the blinding dust we raised, they gave us cheerful smiles, revealing the whitest of teeth. The dwellings of earth or wood may be poor and small, often with paper as substitute for glass in the windows, but the peasants seem contented, and have a way of doffing the cap that touches the heart of the stranger, who accepts the action, not as a deferential salute, but as a friendly greeting. In the *sat*, the innkeeper—or *Carciumar*—is the leading citizen and if, as is often the case, he is also the mayor, exercises even more influence than the *popa* or priest. He keeps the beer-house and his front yard serves as the dancing floor when on Sundays the lads and lasses assemble. As general storekeeper and purchaser of the product of the villager's industry the inn-keeping mayor is a veritable *Pooh Bah*.

One's first night adrift on the dusty roads of Europe brings home, as nothing else can, the immeasurable advantage of the dustless surfaces which carpet the highways of Britain. The head-lamps of a car approaching through the powder-laden atmosphere fill the road with a glare so hopelessly blinding

that when the driver dims, one dims in response; dims and gropes stealthily on until the way is clear. On Britain's black, tar-sealed roads, the oncoming headlights may be dazzling, but they do not overpower like this. The light is not refracted by a billion white dust particles and so transformed into a veritable fog. The British driver will find it an advantage when abroad to have his car fitted with a dimming, as well as with a dipping device. The use of the latter, alone, does not always induce the approaching driver to reduce his lights. Dipping gear is not common in Europe and the foreign driver is inclined to refuse to dim unless the other man does exactly the same.

At Giurgiu, the invaluable G. led us straight to M. le Préfet, M. Grigorescu, who wasted no time in laying down the town's equivalent for the red carpet. The exchange of compliments finished, he clapped his hands twice and an orderly came running with cigarettes. He clapped them three times to summon three barefooted girls who disposed of themselves in a line. The first held a shining copper basin. The second poured water on our hands and tendered soap. The third was the bearer of towels. And when we were cleansed, M. le Préfet hosed us down with a scent spray. "Now about beds. The accommodation is humble in my poor town—there was much damage done by the shells from across the Danube"—he said, and became reflective. Then two more rounds of applause by the Préfet and the orderly reappeared, went out and came back with two gendarmes and their sergeant. What did this mean? Were we about to be placed under arrest? No matter; fortunately we were well known at the Legation at Bucharest and had introductions to the royal circle and could explain. The advent of the police was merely a committee meeting, when it was resolved that a reconnoitring party would search the town for rooms.

This matter disposed of, we invited M. Grigorescu and Madame to dine. More applause produced a servant who took orders to find droschkies which presently bore us in stately

procession to the Restaurant Gradina, where under the stars we sat down to enjoy yet another unique experience.

This model in *Préfets* would not surrender his right to be host. Were we not commended to him by the Government? There must be no argument—whereat he clapped again and the waiter came and went to return with the *maître d'hôtel*. Followed a discussion in Romanian. Then the chef was summoned and he and his assistants displayed raw meats and fish for selection. A quarter of an hour was devoted to choosing the meal and a half hour more to its preparation, but the time fled all too quickly, for *tuica* and cigarettes, talk of the town and of war filled the interval. M. Grigorescu had been a gunner colonel and fought through Transylvania, being in the "last ditch" when peace was signed. In Western America they would class him a good "mixer."

Then the banquet began and with rounds of wine, talk, and music it was eleven before we rose—not to retire! Oh! no! The *Préfet* had entertainment for us—the annual fair was proceeding. "It is wonderful" he declared. It certainly was an engaging sight and the open-air *café-chantant* put on a team of Romanian dancers who, in London could command in a week as much pay as they drew here in a year.

Rooms had been found for us, one at the Hotel Panaitopol and the other at the Europa—modest hotels, but clean rooms, and at three a.m. we sought them, to leave again at six. Bidding farewell to the *Préfet*, we steered for the landing stage, not daring to wait even for a cup of coffee, the clock showing that the ferry-boat was due. We arrived first—by two hours—and so, next time we pass that way, we shall ignore such things as time-tables and take breakfast in the prevailing leisurely fashion; and may the *Préfet* be with us.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOME OF THE BULGARS

AT our feet flowed the blue Danube, nearing the end of its 1,700 miles journey from its source in the Black Forest of Germany, hard by where the frontiers of France and Switzerland join. Blue Danube? Well—hardly blue, and not quite at our feet, but sunk by the drought a full thirty feet below, where floated the barge destined to receive the car, if we could achieve the seemingly impossible manœuvre of getting it down the semi-vertical and narrow gangway to the pontoon. Even then our troubles would not be over, for a careful survey revealed that a miniature bridge would have to be erected to reach the barge beyond. However, thanks to the unpunctuality of the tug, we had ample time. Also there were numerous helpers; some in authority, others merely volunteers and, as it proved, about as useful as the circus clown. Everyone was willing to do something—the reason for which afterwards appeared.

The danger was that should the car get out of control, nothing could save it and the driver from a nose-dive to destruction. Therefore we took preliminary steps, paid out guy ropes secured to the back, and detailed tasks to the more intelligent looking of the mob. But what we said didn't go. Excited officials and semi-officials explained volubly in Romanian that they knew a better way. Had they not had experience? As the charwoman said in contradiction to the welfare worker who sought to remove beer from the baby's diet. "It does 'em good, and I ought ter know, 'aving buried eight!"

The experience of the members and friends of the Waterside Workers Union at the Port of Giurgiu was probably comparable with that of this expert. Our car weighed nigh on two tons. Clearly we would have to take firm control of proceedings if confusion and catastrophe were to be avoided. As a substitute for spoken orders we staged an ocular demonstration of our requirements, using a handcart as model. Everyone was given his allotted place and the operation carefully rehearsed. Then followed the proof of it all. Would the car—could it—be handled safely? Arthur was once plunged suddenly in a car from Boulogne quay into the depths of the harbour, but as there had been no warning, anticipation was lacking and so there was no sense of dread. But this was different. It was preparing to meet a likely doom, and the excitement of the crowd aided this effect. The true hero keeps cool in such circumstances. We were no heroes and, besides, the sun was blazingly hot.

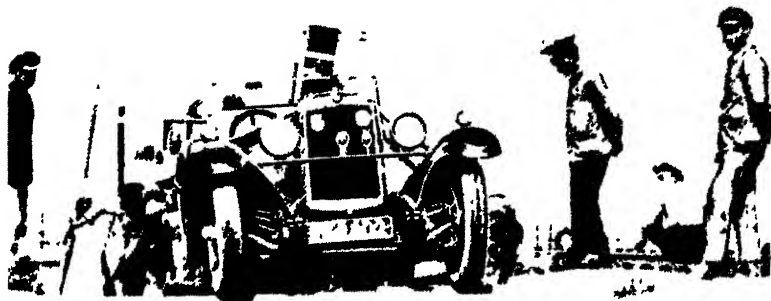
All in due time, and very gingerly the car advanced; balanced; tipped and began the fearful descent to an accompaniment of shouted orders from everyone at once to everyone else. Somehow our plan worked, the men on the ropes lay back, as in a tug-of-war, yielding inch by inch until the bottom was reached. The ordeal was over.

We had paid two thousand lei—two pounds ten shillings—in advance for freightage and now the official in charge approached. "Baksheesh," he said. By giving him a heavy tip we judged the business over, but were mistaken, for next there came to us a fellow we had christened "Old Bill," with followers, who had worked nobly. "Baksheesh," he pleaded. We pointed to the official. Old Bill shrugged a negative, as if to imply that he and his mates could hope for no dividend from that quarter. We shrugged our negative, dismissed the deputation and turned to enjoy the café Turc which the captain of the barge had prepared in our honour. Soon a scene of excitement on the quay disturbed the calm which had descended. This was Old Bill and Co., endeavouring not

unforcibly to lever lei from the official recipient of our bounty. But all to no effect, and when we saw him standing dejectedly gazing down, we beckoned and made it right with him.

Three miles away across the Danube, now a blaze of silver, lay Ruschuk and Bulgaria. We were about to enter the lands of unrest, the cradle of war. There, at Ruschuk, had once existed a stage on the great road built by the Romans along the river when they subdued the Dacians. After them came hordes of fighting men who, century after century, had swept the countryside, stamping out life without quarter in every valley. To-day, as we drove southward, we were to pass through one of the last-surrendered strongholds of the Turk in Europe; land he had held by ruthless tyranny and repressive method. Life had been held cheaply over there, across the river, in the country which once Ferdinand ruled. Would we meet rough usage, or at the least, a cold reception by the Bulgar? He had but recently been our enemy and joined in inexcusable alliance with his own implacable foe, the Turk. He had seen defeat, had experienced poverty, hunger and all but national ruin. Did he nurse a grievance or did he take it like the man history makes him? That we intended travelling the Balkans unarmed had been a cause of grave anxiety to many friends before we left England. They had read the newspapers—and the scare headlines seemed to point the danger of not being prepared to fight for our lives. We decided that, as tourists, we would rely on receiving hospitality and not meet trouble half-way.

The answer to the questions which passed between us, lying stretched on the barge, came from the tug which an hour later came to tow us across and brought a committee of welcome comprising M. A., the President, and the Secretary of the Ruschuk branch of the Royal Bulgarian Automobile Club on behalf of headquarters at Sofia. There was a raising of hats, exchanging of greetings and of cards, talk of roads and other things affecting our journey. "The road? yes, in places it is bad, and not easy to find, but my Secretary will



UP FROM THE DANUBE INTO BULGARIA

Photo Authors



MOSQUITOES SHARED OUR CAMP BENEATH THE STARS

Photo Authors

accompany you to Sofia." This, by the President, who did not see anything unusual in providing a pilot for a journey of 217 miles, with an obligation to return by rail next day. We are not quite so generous in Britain.

The embarkation of the car had been difficult. The process of off-loading and working it up an equally vertical ascent was made worse indeed by the fact that insufficient petrol reached the carburetter and the engine helped with only a fraction of its usual power. However, all things, good or bad, end sometime, and before long our fainting spirits were being revived at the Hotel Teteven by the breakfast we had not had at Giurgiu.

It was now past ten and a day of heat more intense than is usual even in Bulgaria. The last parting enjoinder was: "You must drive carefully through the Stara Planina Mountains and exercise caution at the Araba Konak Pass—it is difficult." Our host spoke truly, as events turned out.

We began well, for though the surface was poor, it was, at least, a metalled road. But beyond Bjela this great highway, for such it is, ceased to fulfil its title. It just petered out. It became a wide grass-grown track with nothing to show that it was a road except the dim outline of the ditches flanking it. And when we came to a fork, and took the wrong branch, and finished up in some deserted village—who shall blame us? It was then that our friend proved his value by guiding us through lanes and over fields until, presently, the main "road" was regained, which, improving, brought us a little later to Plevna (Pleven), where the paving stones stand on edge, but good cheese, rye bread and wine may be had.

* * * *

This was Plevna, the scene of the siege in 1877 that will go down through history as one of the greatest and most heroic on record. It was a summer afternoon of fainting heat when we came in sight of Plevna, so we pulled up in the shade alongside the road where some of the most

desperate fighting of the siege had taken place ; here was a grave that held the mortal remains of three thousand Turks who had died fighting in the struggle for the ridge we were on ; a ding-dong fight it had been, sometimes the Russian trenches became Turkish, then they changed hands, the swaying lines rolled backwards and forwards across our halting place, the Russians making superhuman efforts to carry the Turkish entrenchments, the Turks clinging precariously to the ground. The struggle was tremendous in its intensity ; in the scope of its slaughter as in the fierceness of resolve that characterized this duel between the Cross and the Crescent. In one brigade of seven thousand men, five thousand two hundred bit the dust ; yet the survivors fought on blindly without cohesion and without definite plan.

Fifty yards farther down from where, on that sunny August day, we surveyed the scene of carnage, an outhouse and some roughly-thrown entrenchments had been the object of dispute. Here a regiment held out as a scattered group in a semicircle of fire, fighting on, heedless of the progress of events elsewhere, and concentrating solely on their own small circle of life and death. It required but little imagination to conjure up the scene as it must have been on that morning fifty years before ; the air thick with smoke fumes, the dust raised by the canister as it burst on every square yard of ground, whilst out of the pall of smoke and dust and gloom would appear charging infantry. Above the din of cannon, the rattle of the mitrailleuse, the incessant crack of rifles, came the clamour of voices, the hoarse rancour of hate, the cries of "Allah" and the sacred exhortations of the Turk, the shouts of those in fear and pain, of those who were fighting hopelessly but none the less fiercely. And so for 143 days the struggle went on, until the Russians, aided by the Romanians, wore down the defence and Osman Pasha and the remnant of his army surrendered to the Tsar in December 1877.

We were glad to have seen Plevna, to have made acquaintance

with its historic siege, which ranks it with the dauntless few at Thermopylae, the fame of Waterloo, and the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava—yes, and with the even greater glory of our arms in the Great War.

The Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 was the tenth campaign between these rival States. It originated from a rebellion in Herzegovina and Bosnia, which lands we were later on to traverse. The outbreak was said to have been fomented by Russia, age-old enemy of the Turk, and that Serbia and Montenegro were squared to come in on the Russian side. Turkey was then ruling the rebellious lands in her customary manner, but she dealt with this affair rather warily, not liking the menacing attitude of the Bear, or the angry looks of the Lion on the other side of Europe, who, although to some extent pro-Turk, resented the methods of repression peculiar to the Porte.

While Turkey turned to handling the trouble in Herzegovina, the German and French representatives in Salonika were assassinated. Misfortunes rarely come singly, there was unrest at Constantinople, a Sultan was murdered, his successor went mad and was hurled from the seats of the mighty, and so his brother Abdul Hamid—he whom Gladstone styled the Great Assassin—reigned in his stead.

What stories they can still tell you in Sofia of how this Sultan had fifty bedrooms in the Yildiz Kiosk and never slept two nights running in the same room, so great was his dread of the assassin's knife; of how political offenders and suspects were enclosed in iron chests, and consigned in the dead of night to the deep waters of the Bosphorus, of families of so-called conspirators who passed from mortal ken as the owl flits past in the moonlight.

To add to the complications besetting the Porte, an insurrection occurred in Bulgaria which the wisacres also say Russia planned. This was the cue for Serbia and Montenegro, and there followed the Serbo-Turkish war in which Serbia was defeated, and had to appeal to Europe for salvation. Then a

truce was agreed upon, but fresh fighting broke out and the Serbians were once more roughly handled and their country lay at the mercy of the Turk.

Now the Russian Bear rose up ; he was not at all satisfied with the set-back to Slav aims, and growled so ominously at the Sultan that the latter desisted and, to placate him, offered to withdraw. Negotiations followed, but they broke down and the Tsar Alexander of Russia declared war upon the Sultan. Thus commenced the campaign of which the siege and fall of Plevna stand out as a landmark in history.

Peace now reigns over the Plevna district and from the scent of war we can turn to that of attar of roses, for this is one of the most interesting industries in the Balkans. As you pass southward the hot air is heavy with the fragrance of the roses, and the peasants who live in the villages gain their livelihood by cultivating and preparing the essence for export all over the world, so when next we buy a tube of attar of roses in a Regent Street perfumery we shall think of the rose gardens of Bulgaria, of the gaily dressed girls who devote their time and skill to the culture, and the general charm of the plantations. The distilling of the rose petals first came from Persia, where it was a great industry in the days of Omar Khayyám ; in time it became popular in Turkey and the soil of Bulgaria lending itself to the cultivation of the rose tree the Bulgarians took it up under Turkish auspices. There are thousands of acres of trees planted in rows, the favourite variety seeming to be the red and white. We were told that about forty-five thousand roses are required to make one ounce of attar and so realized why it is so expensive a present.

Beyond its historical interest there is nothing to attract the tourist in Plevna, except he arrive on a cattle or wine market day, or unless he has a capacity for searching below the surface of things. Among the crowd of peasants drawn from a wide area of the Balkan foreland and hillmen from the Balkan Mountains many curious types may be studied.

MOUNTAINOUS BULGARIA

The Balkan Mountains form one of the most remarkable natural barriers in Europe, and by their strategical importance have, in the past, determined the racial divisions which have been such a factor in peace and war. Stretching for 373 miles from near the Serbian frontier to the sea, they form a lofty ridge dividing Bulgaria and are of an average width of twenty miles. Curiously enough the highest point of the ridge (7,785 feet) is also the narrowest, and another unique feature is that the passes in the extensive central range all exceed 6,000 feet.

Bulgaria boasts other fine mountains, amongst the rugged crags of which, bear, boar, chamois and red deer abound, and in whose protected valleys fruit trees flourish, vines yield famous grapes and the roses are cultivated to make the attar. One of the most lovely and fertile of the valleys South of the Balkan range is that by Kazanlik, one hundred miles east of Sofia, where more extensive rose gardens are found. Here are grown the *Rosa alba* and *Rosa damascena*.

We commented on the gaunt bareness of the mountains and were told that at one time they were covered with huge forests of beech and oak, but the Turk laid axe to them and denuded the country before his yoke was cast off.

Bulgaria is a land of little rain, the mountains are steep, and the rivers small, consequently much of the country is arid. The tourist will find that these conditions, taken with the strong national characteristics of the people, serve to make it a country of unique interest. Here is no easily cultivated land, nor a peasantry expecting ripe fruit to drop into its mouth. Nowhere in the world are the labourers more industrious. And a curious fact is that, for all their military valour, the Bulgars are a docile race trained in obedience, no doubt, by centuries of rule under the whip of Turkish masters. A testimonial to national discipline is the fact that, though the people were Anglo and Russo-philic, and disagreed with King Ferdinand's choice of sides in the war, they gave their services so freely, that Bulgaria mobilized nearly twenty per

cent. of the population. She lost 150,000 killed out of a population of five and a half millions. And all this followed the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 with their heavy casualty lists. Approximately one third of the fit adults of Bulgaria have died in battle within fourteen years. There is good reason for saying that the Bulgar is a faithful citizen. His need has been good leadership, but unfortunately the intelligentsia—the middle classes—and an aristocracy, as we understand them, have not existed, and in the fifty years that Bulgaria has stood as an independent state there has been little time to create these stabilizing elements. In the past the peasant electors have often been betrayed by those whom they had trusted to represent them in the Sobranje. With the development of the civic spirit an improvement in public administration is already apparent.

We had an interesting glimpse of the peasants at close quarters as we took the only meal which the rough inn at Plevna could supply. At other tables they sat in respectful silence, occupied as were we; splendid fellows, tall and bronzed by the blistering sun, dressed in clean cotton jumpers and trousers cross-gartered to the knee, some with lambskin hats which added to their own great height. There was one, with a wilting scar disfiguring his face from nose to chin, who had been a fighter in each of the three wars since 1911 and looked the part. He seemed a man of quiet nature, probably was a good father, but we imagined him a stern fighter. Stern by our standard, but not here in the Balkans, where one must give as one expects to take, or go under. And we should not blame them wholly for the fighting, either, but must take our share of responsibility. For fifty years the Great Powers have used the Balkan races as pawns in a game of life and death; the promise of life being reserved by the Powers unto themselves—until the big flare-up came, as it was bound to do ultimately, and involved the world.

How many of us in the west realize that, when we frame a treaty transferring portions of territory from one of the Balkan

nations to the other, those of the people who are aliens are often robbed of their language, schools, and rights. They are subjected to cruel oppressions and denationalization, and must often, perforce, migrate to their parent country, which receives them as unwelcome refugees but does its best for them. The treaties do not bring peace. The war brought death, the treaty oppression, and oppression fomented rebellion ; the only remaining desperate resort of the underdog. History records that the settlement made at the end of the Balkan wars unsettled hundreds of thousands of nationals, who fled, or were expelled, across this or that new frontier with a trail and tale of starvation, exposure, and death by the wayside. Small wonder if the reaction from this is secret organization, Macedonian committees, and conspiracy driven underground where, in the dark, evil plots are hatched.

Our guide talked dispassionately of all these things as we drove along a highway, gone to ruin for lack of the money soaked up by war and indemnities, and through villages reduced to poverty in like circumstances.

Beyond Plevna the country rises towards the foot-hills of the Stara Planina. Since leaving England we had encountered rain for only half a day, and had congratulated ourselves. The conditions were ideal for motoring ; but here the people were suffering from the drought. The maize was scorched ; the stalks one half their proper height, the cobs shrivelled before fruition. "There is a hard winter ahead," said our friend "The peasants will have difficulty." Truly life is difficult in this beaten land where nature, as well as man, can be stern. This military road had suffered from the traffic of armies and all manner of transport had passed over and wrecked it. During the day we came to an erstwhile bridge, but now only a substitute ; so tremulous that we were warned not to use it by the engineer superintending the erection of a new steel structure. He sent us round through fields, and after plunging over ditches and along a dry watercourse we were fortunate in striking the road half an hour later.

It was now four p.m. and the sun came slanting full in our faces on the south-west course, and this with the haze of dust raised by slouching bullock-teams made driving desperately fatiguing, and the desire for refreshment irresistible to parched throats.

It is as well to eschew long drinks if thirst is to be avoided. Better to follow the practice of the Oriental and take something not too "wet" but stimulating. Café Turc admirably fulfils this purpose. At any wayside village the Turkish coffee house may be found, where the proprietor takes fresh roasted berries and either pounds them in the stone mortar, after the manner of his forefathers, or grinds them in the little brass handmill used throughout Asia Minor and the Balkans. One waits with a patience which becomes an easy habit. Soon the little brass pot is on the charcoal fire, the water boils, a liberal spoonful of coffee is put in, and brought twice to the boil. Then the pot and a cup without handle, nested in a brass stand, is presented. The liquid is thick and sweet but serves to stimulate and reduce thirst in a manner which a glass of cold wine or beer would fail to do, while at the same time avoiding the unpleasant dampness which a long drink induces.

To our east lay the old capital, Tirnovo, at the foot of the northern slopes of the Balkan mountains, with a delightful site on the river Yantra, which here flows between wooded hills. There is cloth weaving, dyeing and silk-worm culture in this ancient town, where the houses are terraced up a 500 foot cliff and everything is Oriental, with a lingering flavour of the departed Turk. Not many tourists find their way to Tirnovo—yet.

Hunger came with the sunset and we ate an ever-to-be-remembered meal of eggs and yourgout under a spreading tree at the friendly inn of Ablanica, with the spotlight as illumination; the whole of the village gathered around in silent speculation about us. The peasant ever suspects mystery in the unusual, and our sudden appearance out

of the night forebode no good—or so their looks seemed to imply.

Earlier we had passed a priest, black-robed and hooded, riding an ambling ass and our guide had said “a mounted popa brings bad luck.” He spoke truth, for afterwards the Fates seemed against us. Leaving Ablanica, at 1,400 feet above the sea, the road began seriously to climb the hills, penetrating valleys which, in the gloom, appeared shut in by veritable cliffs of jagged rock. What would have been easy gradients and corners became difficult hazards. It had been a tiring day and we were all feeling the effects of fatigue, our friend and guide included. He was worried that we were faced with the conquest of the Pass of Araba Konak in the dark, and made our flesh creep with tales of cars which had come to grief in deep gullies. Certainly the going as we approached the pass was becoming steeper and more ominous. In places the road had slipped away, or there had been a fall of earth from above, which when it showed up dimly in the glare of the headlights called for instant brake work and, then a manoeuvre to pass it, involving dangerously close approach to the edge of the precipice. If this were the preamble, what of the pass itself? “I would advise great care,” murmured our guide again, and lapsed into deep sleep.

More gorges, ascents, narrow bridges, dry water courses, defiles and sudden bends, dévoid of guard walls—would this mountaineering never end? The time? Heavens, it was midnight! Where were we! How far to Sofia? Arthur, who was driving, called to the partner behind and received no answer. There is an eerie feeling about driving through interminable mountains at night with one's passengers asleep and oblivious to the difficulties. “Suppose these is a crash,” he reflects. “I may not be able to convince them, at the hospital, that it was inevitable—was not my fault.” This dog-tiredness, and the hour, decided the matter. Looking for a suitable place, he drew into the roadside, halted the car, stopped the engine and got out the map. Alone he consulted

it. There were ninety kilometres ahead—and the pass—a drive of three hours at least. Obviously the thing was to join his companions in sleep till dawn and then away by daylight to Sofia, receptions, bath, breakfast and business.

And so under the stars by a tumbling mountain stream we stretched on the dusty verge ; not caring if there were robbers in these hills or mosquitoes, snakes or anything else that bites, and forgot our troubles.

Just about the same midnight hour two cars set out from Sofia along our road. In them were Senor Romero y Dusmet,* Spanish Minister in Bulgaria, and President of the Automobile Club—M. K., the Secretary General, and others, our friends-to-be, who estimated that, when ten p.m. passed without our appearing, and eleven and twelve, we must at least be nearing the city. They travelled forty-five kilometres to south of the pass and—not knowing that we were stopped, asleep, beyond it—turned back, wondering when we would arrive. Would it be possible anywhere to find greater solicitude for the welfare of strangers than this ? We were to discover that hospitality is a long suit in Sofia.

Shortly after dawn we were stirring, glad to rise from our rocky beds, but otherwise thoroughly discontented. Stiff, unshaven and desperately thirsty, the thought of civilization now within measurable distance soon put the car into motion again, and as we wound cautiously through the pass, we were devoutly thankful we had given it best over night. Thus we came to Sofia.

* * * *

After Madrid, Sofia is the loftiest capital in Europe, being at an altitude of 1,804 feet and on an upland plain. When the kingdom was inaugurated in 1879, Sofia was chosen to replace Tirnovo, and a vow taken to make it the first capital in the Balkans. Certainly the population, now well over

* *Footnote* :—At the moment of going to press we learn, with deep regret, of the sudden death of Senor Romero y Dusmet.



Photo Authors

THE GYPSY AUDIENCE



Photo Authors

A BULGARIAN VILLAGE ORCHESTRA



THE HUSBAND RIDES

Photo Authors

HOW TO GET MONEY

100,000, has greatly increased, many fine streets have been laid and modern public buildings erected. The new cathedral is impressive with its golden dome aglitter under the Bulgarian sun.

The hotels though falling behind the standard in other capitals, exceed expectation and serve the passing traveller. We found the bedrooms, with bathrooms attached, satisfactory and worth the charge, 300 Leva a day, or about sixteen shillings, and cheaper rooms were to be had—at 100 Leva.

The difficulty about money increases as a grand European tour proceeds. Already we had paid out in Dutch Guilder, German Reichsmarks, Czech Kroner, Polish Zloty, American Dollars, and Romanian Lei and, from time to time had cleared our pockets of accumulating currency oddments by sacrificial exchange. One must either face this loss or tie up useful money in a miscellany of currencies to be sold in London; which certainly would be the lesser of two evils were it not that the rates are so unstable. We were saved any trouble in changing money by a letter awaiting us at the hotel from Baron de C., Director-General of the Franco-Bulgarian International Bank of Commerce, who was entirely at our disposal and courteously secured for us special permission to buy Greek and other currencies needed. Owing to the parlous condition of national finance, the normal rules of procedure are not so easy as this. One cannot enter a bank in the Balkans, present a cheque, or letter of credit, and walk out with a wad of notes, all in a minute.

Oh, no, they do not deal with real money in that casual way in a Balkan bank. "You wish to draw money!" a stern official will observe, frowning in dark disapproval. "Why do you want to draw money?" When you come to think of it that is a disconcerting question. Why does one want to draw money? It is no use telling him you want to spend it. You do think of informing him that you are collecting the paper money of all nations to paste in a scrap book. But they have no sense of humour in Balkan banks. You tell him you want

money because you have none, and that makes him suspicious. Then you get angry. "Look here," you say, "it's our money you've got, and I mean to have it." He stares, blanches, disappears behind a screen and returns after a long interval with a longer form and a large colleague who comes to look at the strange people who want to draw money. "Sit down," commands the large colleague. "Sit down with those others." And you sit down among people who had been waiting an hour or more for their money.

After more earnest consultations which you see proceeding through the grille you are led by a clerk to the Presence, who also wishes to know why you want to draw money. You tell him you could not be happy without it, and at last with reservations the Presence signs his name. "Now we shall get our money" you tell each other gleefully. And you do, after waiting half an hour at the end of a queue in a stifling atmosphere. Money and a Balkan bank are not easily parted.

Baron de C. saved us this delay and our pilgrimage through the offices of the National Bank was expedited by good staff work. We met friends there, however, who were fighting their way heroically through Government regulations and red-tape.

We had heard much of Bulgaria from The O'Mahoney whose name lives in Sofia in connection with the Home he established many years ago for refugee Armenian boys. The O'Mahoney was one of the few stalwarts who had been a faithful adherent of Parnell to the last, and after his death had gone to Bulgaria, whence he returned in 1915 to throw his weight into army recruiting in Ireland. "I was right when I supported Parnell" he would thunder from the platform, "and I am right now in urging you to help win this war." Before ever Bulgaria joined the Central Powers, he declared to one of us—what is now admitted—that if the Allies had announced their intentions, not in confidential notes which never got beyond the ears of Ferdinand and his Ministers,

but publicly for the Bulgar people to hear, the country would have supported our cause. With memories of the Serbian War in 1913, the Bulgarians had difficulty in becoming their Allies, and Germanic propaganda did the rest. Equally emphatic publicity of Allied aims and of the advantage of joining her old patron and saviour, Russia, would have had an even greater chance of success.

* * * *

Our first luncheon was a delightful introduction to the social life of Sofia. Senor Romero, is both the doyen of motoring and an artist, and had painted pretty menu cards which, to commemorate our journey, depicted the route we had followed.

In itself the meal was a rare and refreshing episode after our vicissitudes, but when our host placed couches at our disposal in a darkened room and bade us take a needed siesta to overcome our fatigue, we were doubly thankful that we had come to Sofia. Later, over tea "the Minister," as he is known to motorists, discussed automobilism from the tourists' point of view. Bulgaria, he said, contains much of unique interest—not the least being the people. In Western Europe these probably bore the reputation of being dangerous and inhospitable, which was an entire fiction. He had toured every district of Bulgaria and spoke from first-hand knowledge of how the visitor is treated as a guest to whom hospitality is due as a right. He will find poor hotels except at certain centres, and as to roads most of these still leave much to be desired. Bulgaria is no place for the "soft" motorist. It is certain that conditions in the country are not worse than many which must be encountered in reaching it. "We have now produced a series of motoring maps," he added, "but as the names are in Cyrillic characters the tourist would be well advised to go to the slight trouble of learning this alphabet, unless he remembers his school Greek."

In fulfilment of a promise, the Minister led us one day to a village high up in the hills where we saw some beautiful costumes

and dancing. The Bulgarian round dance, to the music of a two-reed pipe, is a slow circling affair. The dancers advance and reverse, much as in the Romanian Hora, though the movement really bore more resemblance to the dancing we had seen the previous summer in the little republic of Andorra, high up in the Pyrenees. It is curious to reflect that though the inhabitants of Europe differ by wide extremes, there are many unexpected things and customs held in common in the countryside.

The costumes in this village were strictly uniform and of several dozen girls it would be difficult to detect variations in their dress. This comprised a dark sleeveless tunic and skirt, heavily embroidered in bright colours with designs which it must have taken an infinity of labour to complete. Most of the girls were bare-headed, unlike the village maidens of Romania. In one corner of the village there was a family of gypsies, the man in rags and the woman in wide Turkish bloomers of bright cotton stuff. Whether they had been drinking too much raki or discussing old grievances was not clear, but a regular domestic row was going on in which the man showed every sign of running amok before night.

* * * *

Bulgaria is settling down to the task of reconstruction, her population is going ahead and although at the last census in 1926 it totalled but five and a half millions it is increasing at the rate of one hundred and twenty thousand per annum.

The Bulgars are a shrewd and methodical race and they seem intent on peace and tranquillity at home and abroad in order to restore their economic life, quite apart from the necessity, as they realize it, of cultivating and bringing to fruition the friendliest relations with neighbouring states. We found that those who control the destinies of Bulgaria have faith in the League of Nations, for did it not achieve a signal purpose in the Graeco-Bulgarian dispute in 1925 ? of which more anon.

Without in any way presenting a case, it must be said

that the Bulgars have initiated financial reform and stabilized their currency without the necessity of calling in foreign help, whilst at the same time they claim that they, alone of all the debtor nations, have paid their way and to date discharged their obligations under the Treaty of Neuilly. In return, the Bulgars ask that the terms of the above treaty should be complied with on the part of those nations concerned with, *inter alia*, the minority question; one of the most pressing matters affecting Bulgarian national life and sentiment. This means that the Bulgar national, resident in other countries of the Balkans, should, under provisions of the treaty in question, be permitted to enjoy his own up-bringing and education in the national tongue; in a word that Bulgaria should have its nationals in outside states possessing the same rights and privileges as they would in the more advanced European States. At present this is a grievance of which one hears much.

One of the difficulties of Bulgaria is that the war deprived her of the coastline along the Ægean Sea, which was made over to Greece, Bulgar commerce being forced to follow the route by the Black Sea, or the laborious passage of the Danube. Since then Bulgaria has striven for a restoration of former access to the sea; a question which looms continually in the national mind and is still a bone of contention. This latter is the crux of the problem as affecting Bulgaria, although there are others, all contributing, each in its own way, to possible disruption and a clash of interests. Truly the clouds in the Balkans are not easy of dispersion.

To overcome the difficulty of access to the Ægean it was proposed by the Allied Powers that Dedagach lying to the east of Salonika should be neutralized and made a free port, but this was declined by the Bulgars. At present there is an arrangement concluded between Greece and Bulgaria by which the Greek Free Zone was initiated at Salonika to give the Balkan States access to the Ægean Sea without restriction. By an unfortunate coincidence on the day that this zone was declared open, a collision occurred between the Bulgars and

the Greeks at Demirhissar, a town which narrowly escaped the shock of war, and through which we passed on our southward journey.

* * * *

The present Sofia owes its construction and development largely to the efforts of ex-King Ferdinand whose diplomacy and conduct caused so much mistrust in the cabinets and chancelleries of Europe. Whatever claims he may have to kinship with the fox, there is no doubt that he displayed considerable genius in the building of the present-day Sofia. His successor has carried on the good work and in a few years the capital should be worthy of the State.

We went out to Vrana a few miles from Sofia where King Boris has a palace originally created by his father. The road to it is not of the best but, once there, you are in a different world. On the left of the road is a forest of young birch, fir, and pine, with a low wire fence enclosing it, then a white gateway, such as would mark the entrance to an estate in the Scottish lowlands. You enter this and move along an avenue littered with pine needles and then through tastefully laid out rock gardens and flower beds to a house in the Byzantine style. It is built largely of wood hewn from adjacent forests, with gables and eaves, and an air of quiet dignity. It has a lounge that leads off into dining, drawing, and writing rooms, trophies of the chase adorn the walls, and rare plants and flowers are everywhere, for both the king and his father can be numbered amongst the botanical experts of our time.

To us the glory of Vrana lay in its gardens and orchards ; we saw apples that would have commanded a prize at a London show, not to mention the cabbages and cauliflowers. Then there are the hot-houses with the flora of South America, the tropical East, and dainty specimens from far Japan.

Kings are human people after all, and our genial Colonel W. who was in the immediate entourage of the monarch, told us how his Majesty grubs up weeds, lops off a branch here and there, and re-arranges the floral decorations. The royal

bedroom is simplicity itself, just the plain wooden bed and mattress, a polished floor covered with a mat or two and a large window looking out on to the forest and gardens; just the place where sweet repose would come, with the moonlight streaming in through the latticed shutters, and the call of the birds in the morning to awaken one to another day of glorious life.

In traversing the path of reconstruction towards a new Bulgaria, the people have a leader of peculiar skill and sagacity in King Boris, who has the advantage of wide travel to aid him in his knowledge and judgment of men and things. In fact, the Bulgarian monarch is decidedly versatile in tastes and inclinations, he knows quite a lot about zoology and botany and, when on a recent Swiss tour, discovered a new variety of alpine plant never previously classified, but which has now entered the botanical world under the name of *Primula Boris*.

King Boris has a wonderful memory for faces and for events in the past, although it may be a dozen years since they happened. Few men have that faculty, but when they possess it they are themselves numbered amongst the great. It is an asset which goes a long way towards welding a people together and teaching them that touch of human sympathy which makes the world kin. He has, too, the gift of being democratic without sacrifice of dignity; the whole countryside knows the monarch, for he spends much of his spare time in motoring on the highways and byways and coming into personal touch with his people.

Quite recently he was out on a joy-ride in the hills and stopped under the shade of the trees for an alfresco lunch. Along the road came an old peasant well on into the allotted span of three score years and ten who, when he saw the king and his aide-de-camp seated by the roadside, gave them the customary Bulgarian greeting passed by all travellers one to the other, "God be with you," to which the monarch responded. The old farmer went further and hoped that the two would

enjoy a good meal, not knowing whom he was addressing. An invitation to join in the repast was accepted and under the soothing influence of good wine the old man waxed eloquent, spoke of his pigs, his fields, and the prospects of the crops. Then another wayfarer appeared as the king was about to move on again, and whispered to the old fellow who his host was, as the car was being started up. The old man was so overwhelmed that he begged the king to forgive him, following it up by asking if His Majesty would attend the wedding of his niece to be held, as is usual in Bulgaria, on a Sunday, at a date six weeks ahead. The king said he would see what could be done and there, for the time being, the matter rested. Six weeks later the royal motorist took another turn in the hills, came to the village, where all the family, children and grandchildren innumerable, were gathered, and assisted at the wedding. Small wonder that this democratic ruler is popular amongst his people.

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When we accepted the invitation to spend the evening with Colonel P., and his brother-in-law, Colonel T., we wondered what fresh experience was in store. At our request dinner was taken at a restaurant where we could have a seat out-of-doors and the cooking would be in the Bulgarian style. One commences a meal in Sofia with the local equivalent for a cocktail, which is none other than our old friend the Tuica of Romania, or plum brandy, under the Slav name of Slivovitz. After that came a good soup flavoured strongly with garlic, followed by an appetizing dish which, for lack of better description, one might call either a mixed grill or a lucky dip. There were little bits of varied meats and fowl, tripe, liver and oddments, from which to choose, garnished with paprika, or red pepper with the hot seeds removed—though not all of them, as one discovers and weeps silently in an effort to suppress the pain. A spoonful of raw mustard is an ice cream compared to paprika seed. The final course was coffee taken at the T's menage, where, seated among a riot of

THE WAY OF THE BALKANS

Eastern decoration, we were entertained by Madame, and regaled with tales of the wars in which her husband had fought.

By now we were becoming used to taking leave of capitals and good friends made in each country visited, but practice did not lessen the regrets, when it came to hitting the long trail southward for Salonika. Some told us we could make this journey of 200 miles in the day. Others, describing the difficulties of road, mountain and, lastly, of the dreaded Piste below Demirhissar, advised the contrary. The latter won and so we were provided with introductions to the Préfet of Petrich, which lies off the road, hard by the Greek frontier. Before leaving, we visited the Albanian Legation and arranged for our arrival at the Albanian frontier to be notified. The reception by the Minister was ceremonious. Coffee was served and cigarettes, compliments exchanged, there was small-talk and then—but not till the necessary atmosphere had been created—to business.

No one hurries in the Balkans. Regulations are elastic. Everyone may be suspicious of the stranger but he is always well received. Appointments are loosely made. "I will see you to-morrow" that is all; no time, or place mentioned. If you criticize this easy-goingness, the same answer will be rendered in Bulgaria, Greece, Albania or Yugo-Slavia:—"C'est les Balkans." "It is the way of the Balkans." The only thing for the visitor to do is to fall into the local habit, and go easy, picking his way from day to day.

Early one morning, and piloted by "The Minister" and party, we parted the crowd of idle fellows who had gathered round, attracted by the stir of our departure, and made for Dupnitsa. We needed no piloting, for the way was straightforward, but we would not for worlds have missed the friendly gesture implied; and the final scene, the taking of photos, the cordial grasp of the hand by the wayside forty kilometres out from the town, are not forgotten. The tourists who travel from Britain to see the Balkans will make many friendships;

each of which is one more rivet in the chain of international amity.

Soon we were pressing ahead as fast as the road would permit, but keeping a weather eye out for numberless *caniveaux*, i.e., the open gullies across the road. Nothing is more excruciating than the unexpected drop into one of these fearful traps, nor more likely to wreck the fulfilment of a Balkan tour than allowing this to happen with an overloaded car. Taking every precaution, however, it is impossible to slow up in time for every caniveau and so, occasionally, we would crash upon one, stop, examine the springs—and proceed with relief, but more guardedly.

The road southward led us through a dry and blistered land that lay breathless and shimmering in the noonday sun. Even with the hood up, as is wise in this climate, we suffered greatly, and hailed with relief the humble eating-house at Djumaya. We needed refreshment before attempting the passage of the Kresne defile, and found it here in juicy melons, black bread, and in beer hauled up like fish from the cooling depths of the well.

The room was crowded with peasants, whilst innumerable flies resented efforts to dislodge them from our food and returned to the attack with a persistence worthy of a better cause, until we gave up the fight and retired to finish our melons in the car; where we were soon surrounded by the swarming populace. Many of these wore the south Bulgarian costume. For the men, this is a white homespun cotton shift with a short-sleeved wool vest and a wide red cummerbund, the head-covering being a helmet of lamb's wool.

No one could accuse the women of the Balkans of being idle. When not engaged in household tasks, they labour in the fields or the vineyards. This done, they take up the distaff, and so on every road, and by many a cottage door they may be seen, the distaff tucked under the left arm while the fingers of the right twirl the bobbin and draw out the thread. When winter comes the yarn thus prepared is woven on hand looms



Photo Authors

SOUTH BULGARIAN COTTAGERS. THE WOMEN ARE CONSTANT SPINNERS



Photo : Authors

THE BAKERY OF A SOUTH BULGARIAN COTTAGER

the counterpart of those of the cottagers among the bleak crags of Donegal and Connemara in Ireland.

The Kresne defile is magnificent and through it flows the Struma, fed in winter by the boisterous streams, now all but dry, falling from the mountain peaks, 6,000 and 7,000 feet above us. Here we came across tobacco cultivation on a large scale, the district being famed for its product. The leaves had been harvested and at each hamlet, the women and children were engaged in threading them on string to be suspended in festoons along every sunny wall. No time must be lost, for there is always the possibility of a thunderstorm, and consequent ruin if the harvested crop gets wetted. This is the Turkish leaf and the industry is one of the few benefits conferred by Islam on the Bulgar. Since the day we passed down this road, the neighbourhood to the east of it has been devastated by the memorable earthquake in April, 1928. May be Djumaya is in ruins, and the inn that fed us no more.

K. had said, "Be sure to leave the main road at the bridge by Livunovo and turn west for Petrich. You cannot miss it, for there is a signboard." The only difficulty in this advice was that the board is in Cyrillic characters which bear no resemblance to the direction sought. A "P" is an inverted "U." "R" is a "P" and the rest are a different spelling. And so when we came to a bridge and found a sign saying something unintelligible, we allowed that this might be our turning and took it. There was no time to waste. The sun was slanting low behind the Belashitza Planina, along whose razor-back runs the frontier of Greece, and long shadows lengthened. We had only the vaguest of plans for shelter that night. We might get a bed at Petrich, and we might not, and did not, in fact. This is no pleasant land in which to emulate the gypsies. Indeed a party of black-avised men had passed us at the corner and we had no desire to spend the night under the same stars within twenty miles of them if it could be avoided. A little turning here and there and then a road climbing towards the mountains led us to our goal; or

rather almost to it. Actually we arrived on one side of a deep river, and Petrich lay beyond, joined by a shameless imitation of a bridge; a thing of gaunt and rotting timbers; an inspiration to Heath Robinson. There was no time to hesitate. We advanced and, though there was an ominous creaking and the structure bent under the unaccustomed load, the other bank was reached.

The difficulty was to find the hotel if such existed, but the men of Petrich speak only Bulgarian, Turkish, Greek or Albanian, and did not grasp our queries in French, German, Russian and English, until we discovered the way to understanding. It is this. Avoid saying, "Where is the hotel, please?" in one or more languages. As likely as not, this will be taken to be a request for direction to the next village. The locals will point excitedly. If they indicate different ways, then you know they have guessed wrong and you must begin again.

The best plan is to adhere to the one word "hotel." It is international and is known even where there is none. Say it all ways. "Hotel, hottel, ottil, ottle." Say it often and make believe to go to sleep, as is done by fairies in children's plays, with the head couched on the arm. Then light dawns on the crowd collected, and the procession will move off. That is what happened to us, but we took only one look at the bedroom offered, one look at the signs on the walls of restless nights by previous occupants—and fled, much to the bewilderment of the expectant populace, who, marvelling at the ways of the foreigner, let us depart in silence.

We sought the market square and a table. "Slivovitza," we said, and then beckoned a soldier, to whom we gave our card of introduction and waved him off about the business of finding the Préfet and bringing him to us.

Soon he appeared, with gendarmes, and joining us, discussed our embarrassing situation. He did not like to admit the hotel was not a good hotel, but settled the question by agreeing that he would not try it himself. After that we turned to food and other subjects, and enjoyed each other's company.

A SUDDEN ATTACK

He was fascinated by our great tour and felt sure that tourists, like us, should come to Bulgaria—and Petrich. Petrich would have an improved hotel soon, was a centre for exploring the famous valley of the Strumnitsa, and were there not other claims to notoriety? "Do you see those hills," he said, pointing to the mountains reared, 5,000 feet above us, "one could cast a stone from the summit into this town. But it was not stones that came hurtling down in 1925. Greeks bands assembled there with machine guns. Market was proceeding, the place was crowded. Suddenly a hail of lead fell amongst us and peace was turned to confusion. Everyone sought shelter, save those whose forms lay huddled amongst the stampeding pack-horses and mules."

The evening wore on. Seated at a café table in the starlit market square, refreshed by the cool night air, we studied with interest both townsmen and peasants, passing or standing in animated groups around us. There was continual stir, for the morrow was market day, and already produce was arriving on laden beasts. Here would be a mule hidden completely beneath a mountain of hay, but for its head showing. There, patient oxen would lumber by drawing a load of melons on an ancient cart whose prehistoric wheels, solid discs of wood, were even as in the beginning.

The Préfet finished his narrative of the strafe of Petrich. Then we rose, asking for the loan of a gendarme to guide us out of the town and into the night. "But you cannot attempt to cross the frontier at this hour," the Préfet exclaimed. "You would be suspect." "We will sleep on the roadside," we said, and bade adieu to a very pleasant and courteous gentleman.

Our recollection of the sequence of what followed is a little hazy, but we had no cause to forget the unexpected bursting of a tyre on a jagged rock fallen from the mountain side; or the labour of changing the wheel in the dark, while dogs bayed around us as to the moon, and it seemed likely that brigands might come to ask more than the time of

night. Also we remember an amazing thirst and nothing wherewith to quench it, except a stream unreachable in the deep ravine below the road. We came to a well and wasted some time dangling the thermos into it at the end of a rope, only to find it bottomless or dry—we never discovered which. Near by was a mud cabin whose occupants, roused from slumber by our midnight marauding, came out, at first suspiciously, and then to our rescue and gave us the run of their water skin. And so to "bed," stretched on the roadside, but not soundly to sleep. This was a night of haunting memories, with fugitive dreams of Petrich and machine guns, of strings of pack-horses padding softly by in the dust, and of mosquitoes. There may be worse mosquitoes than those of the Struma valley, but one cannot imagine a more infamous breed; and with a worse reputation for malaria.

It was not difficult to rise early. Unrested, we viewed each other's swollen faces, arms and legs, and breakfasted off melon and water obtained from a neighbouring homestead.

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The frontier is at Koula village, which knows now that it is Bulgarian, but in the last half century has changed nationality with the frequency, if not the ease, of a chameleon. In 1876 it was Turkish. In March 1878 Bulgaria annexed it, and in July of the same year it was returned to the Turks under the Treaty of Berlin. In 1913 it was again joined to Bulgaria and then, as the result of the Great War, nearly became Greek. Koula is not the sort of place one would choose to retire to from residence in the United States of America, but here we found a Pomak Bulgar, lately a citizen of that country. He ambled up to us, unshaven, dressed in dirty white, barefooted and smiling, and bade us "good morning," asking if he could help. "Ragged Reggie" we called him. He led us to breakfast and, gathered round the charcoal coffee hearth of a Mohammedan tavern, we were served with eggs by the dozen and some in their 'teens,

coffee, and wine, all of which we shared with the guard and "Ragged Reggie," but kept ourselves to ourselves, from some instinct that was not politeness.

The village is a place one would expect to find in the Sudan or other arid region ; low thatched mud huts, with no pretence of a street between them, only a dusty formless space that was both track and garbage dump. The population is increasing here perhaps faster than elsewhere. There were swarms of children, and by the stream, which is both the life of the village and probably the death of others, owing to its insanitary condition, mothers were busy getting the family ready for the day.

The Bulgar is an industrious individual ; here at this early hour everyone was busy, the men carrying hay, the oxen treading out the corn ; women with the distaff, weaving the fabric in which the village clothes itself, women grinding the corn and baking bread. Even "Ragged Reggie" was doing something this morning.

Life at its best at Koula cannot hold many joys, and seated by the Rupel defile it is the first to encounter the dogs of war. Yet the people seemed happy.

Presently, our photographing finished, we took our departure and crossed the bridge, where stood a soldier guarding Greece from intruders.

CHAPTER VII

IN GREEK MACEDONIA

THE car registered its three thousand four hundred and sixty second mile as it picked its way noiselessly over the Bistritsa at its confluence with the Struma, and entered Greece. If cars are capable of emotions, ours must have had the sensation that it had nobly sustained the British tradition of reliability. Its sparking plugs were those in use when we left London ; not one had been adjusted. It had shown no mechanical defect. It had not broken even the smallest component ; though the conditions were enough to have broken its heart. To have only had one real puncture confounded the pundits who had foretold endless jacking up and changing of wheels. " Bullock-shoe nails—you know—and thorns. The roads in the East are bristling with them," they had predicted gloomily. By all ordinary standards the tyres should have given serious trouble. The car was overloaded, the air pressure was rarely maintained as it should be, and then we had driven hard, braking sharply—as it is wrong to do—and every day had been hot, with the sun blazing on the tyres. Had this been a reliability trial we should have won full marks.

So far, the tour had been a sequence of constant diversion, with scenes and peasantry worth the circuit of the world to find. There had been glorious weather and great friendliness in six countries. The garages had been excellent, and even in villages where no petrol pumps or signs outraged the scenery, spirit was obtainable from some hidden storehouse. There

had been misgivings about hotels but with one exception we had always found them clean. Sometimes they were humble, but never disappointing. We had expected, and were prepared to combat, vermin. Like the Thames angler, we had not had a single bite! The roads were often below the standard of the petted Westerner, and many had been simply appalling, but then the horrors of a bad road are vastly diminished by negotiating it slowly and philosophically. In such manner personal discomfort is reduced and only the car inconvenienced. If it is a sound car it will not suffer.

One makes a curious discovery in the Balkans. War may have ruined the old established trunk roads, producing great potholes of unhappy memory, but in other respects it had been a blessing; as we were to find. It was said of the Balkans that the road reports of the historian Livy, written for Roman eyes, were still literally true of the same countryside up to 1914. After this date war and the needs of army transport led to the conversion of many of the tracks into routes negotiable by motor. In short, warfare, whatever else it dissipated, increased man's heritage of roadway. However, the main roads had suffered. The armies came and retreated, blowing up bridges and leaving destroyed surfaces. There has been no money since to put them in repair, although it is now being obtained, so that in a year or so improvement will result.

Statesmen throughout Europe are treating highway development as an urgent necessity. The Greek Government was recently reconstructed after a crisis caused by road finance, and the new Cabinet is negotiating a British loan to remake the highways.

We had ample time to reflect on these problems as we sat beneath a shady tree at the Greek frontier post, awaiting the officer who, within the hour, descended from his bungalow cresting the hill a quarter mile distant. We had no triptyque and owned to some misgiving which the passing minutes had

not lessened. This vanished, however, when the officer showed that the Government at Athens had instructed him to give us safe conduct into the Hellenic Republic.

It was nine when we entered the Rupel defile ; the mountains vivid white in the blazing sun, and jagged limestone rocks showing up through the belts of dark green shrubs that completed the horizon above the pastures. There is scrub oak on these hills, and it forms an impenetrable barrier, so that nothing may hope to pass except by way of the road. Such traffic as desires to travel between Greece and Bulgaria has small choice of route, and this defile is the most important.

We encountered people of all sorts. Once we stopped to allow the passage of a mob of goats in charge of a ragged goat-herd, more redolent than the beasts he drove. We pitied the goats, and kept to windward of him when securing his photograph. The goat-herd's garments were woollen, grey, voluminous, and, to our way of thinking, intolerably hot. He was cross-gartered and sandalled, a typical figure in this part of the landscape, but in dress, nationality, outlook and education, quite foreign to the goat-herd one would meet a mile back in Bulgaria. These mountain ranges separate the races and introduce a barrier between this civilization and that. This may be an admirable country for defence, and cheering to the heart of the soldier, but it does not promote fraternal feeling. The Pomak Bulgar of this valley has no intercourse with the Bulgar of that beyond. Behind those ranges are Vlachs who keep to themselves. Beyond that crest again is a Turkish settlement, also self-contained. Ranging the hills are men quick on the trigger and with their hand set against authority. None the less we were assured the antipathy does not extend to the tourist, or the foreigner. It is reserved by the Balkans for the Balkans.

This was the savage Rupel defile leading to Demirhissar and as the modern motor car sped silently through it we thought of the war and devastation it has witnessed. Over this very spot where we stopped to observe the rocky surroundings a



EARLY MORNING IN THE RUPEŠ DEFILE

Photo Authors



Photo . Authors

conquering host had passed nine hundred years before ; it was under the command of the Bulgar Tsar Krum, and had destroyed a Roman army, killing the Roman Emperor with it. To celebrate his victory the Bulgar monarch took the Roman's skull, made a drinking cup of it and in this he pledged the success of his army. They fought desperately in those days, and when it came to a conflict it was war to the knife. Could the shades of the long-forgotten centuries and the ghosts of the armies that filed past our halting-place, a thousand and twelve hundred years before, have come to life what sights we should have gazed upon. There would have been Samuel the Bulgar Tsar and his army who fought Basil the Byzantine Tyrant and were defeated at Seres, twenty miles from Rupel ; 15,000 prisoners were captured and returned to their commander, but not whole. Basil had a sense of humour, grim and typical of his time. The unfortunate men were divided into hundreds, their eyes were then put out, all except one in each hundred, who was blinded only in one eye that he might lead the rest of his company, and so they wended their way through the defile back to their native land. The circling years have again rolled on ; what is it we now see passing through the ravine ? A great host of men, women and children, Bulgarians again who have been captured by an invader. It is six hundred years since the last event and the host numbers more than twenty thousand, everyone of whom was impaled by order of the captor. The Balkans lived and moved savagely in those days.

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Macedonia has had more than its fair share of disaster ; it has been swept by invading armies, by epidemics, and by earthquakes. The value of the country in itself is great, and considerable crops of wheat and tobacco are grown, but it would be difficult to enthuse over the barren rocks and pastures of Macedonia, except for the storied past of this mysterious land. Modern Salonika, grown two hundredfold, gives the hinterland a new significance, being the doorway

through which everything that is produced hereabouts and in adjacent lands must be exported.

It is curious the effect that nature has on countries that are destined to become the arena for quarrels of successive nations. She seems, in allotting the areas where their disputes are to be fought out through the centuries, to have moulded the ground in accordance with the spirit of the participants. Macedonia is both wild and rugged; it is of volcanic origin, and the contour of hill and plain, ravine and mountain, is such as to overawe and imbue the traveller with fear.

The actual ground itself is certainly fertile and although there is little or no irrigation, vegetables, and grapes ripen in plenty, as well as maize, cotton, the best tobacco in the world, and not a little opium. There is little in the way of scientific cultivation, the plants are left to themselves, to grow up or wither as they may deem best, and the Macedonian bestows only perfunctory care upon them.

For population, this forbidding land is distinctly cosmopolitan, and the various elements of Greek, Serb and Bulgar, have nothing in common, in fact the gulf between them is deep and wide, and mainly kept alive by the irresistible currents of nationality, the persistence of which no man can overcome. As for the Turk who once lorded it over this land, he has now been evicted, in exchange for refugee Greeks from Asia Minor.

We entered Macedonia full of anticipation, for this was the land of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great and, apart from our official duties, we felt that by going there we might gain a little of the reflected glory. How are the mighty fallen! Whatever Macedonia may have been in Alexander's time and the warriors it produced, its fame has long since departed and after being a buffer State between East and West, where Turk, Greek, and Slav have fought for mastery, it has now become divided between Serb and Greek, as a further result of the reshuffling of the political cards at Versailles

TAX COLLECTION À LA TURQUE

after the mis-deal of the second Balkan War in 1913, with a mixed and lethargic population.

Macedonia had a pitiful time under the domination of the incompetent Turk; the latter was able to bring his corrupt administration to bear on the simple and ignorant Macedonians and they were fleeced in divers ways. Part of the revenue collected was in the form of grain; the villager appeared in the autumn at the local government headquarters with his quota of cereals assessed according to the area and productivity of his land. But he was grievously disappointed if he thought that by bringing that amount he was freed from further obligation. The Turkish tax collector was experienced in the art of squeezing the taxpayer and there were few opportunities that he neglected. Ordinarily the official scales in which the grain was weighed gave more or less correct measure, but when it came to an adjustment of the corn tax it was astonishing the amount that was required to induce those scales to obey the laws of gravity.

In those bad old days when the farmer and the peasant were recalcitrant, the Turk had original ways of bringing them to a sense of their responsibilities. They might be stripped and tied to a tree, then covered with honey or some similar sweet substance and left to the attentions of all the winged world. Smoking out the erring taxpayer was a popular pastime with the ruling authority; he would be placed in a tree and a fire of green branches kindled just below him and there he was left to meditate on the propriety of disputing the legality of assessments on his income.

* * * *

We came upon Demirhissar around a bend. It lies on the edge of a frying pan—which is the Struma flat—and seemed to be burnt up under a wilting sun. There was some formality to complete here, so the frontier had told us, but exactly what it was remained obscure. It was not the passport and there was no such thing as a triptyque. For enquiries we halted in a narrow way, with the car thrust between the low hanging

eaves of the wretched hovels on either side, and presently the usual crowd, with flies, pressed round us.

We asked in French and German without success, then in English, with instant response from the usual Graeco-American citizen who quickly cleared the way, and although we did not ask for it, led us first to a place where beer might be had. Possessed of such powers of discernment success awaits him in the western world. He was a well-educated man and why he should elect to live on "frying pan flat" passes comprehension. While he talked he fingered a chain of amber beads, clicking them backwards and forwards, now in twos and now singly, but always restlessly. "I do it because I am an idle fellow" he said, "and it keeps me from smoking too much." Afterwards we were to find many tellers of beads; they are common throughout Macedonia and Albania, and the habit is possessed not only by "idle fellows" but by business men. Much as in England our dandies used to carry a swagger cane, even so these races toy with a rosary, in company or alone.

Without our new guide we would never have found the barracks or prefecture, nor would we have dared to venture up the apparent cul-de-sac beyond which it lay. When we had finished official business, which resulted in our receiving an adhesive label for the windscreen, he discovered a café that served our purpose, being well chosen, for it commanded a corner where the stagnant life of Demirhissar ebbed and flowed and often stopped. As at Lublin, the self-appointed patron invited himself to lunch, eating with a voracity which proved that to him we were a gift from heaven.

If he had left the matter at that our recollections of him would have been pleasant. Unfortunately he advised us not to follow the road right into Seres, but that five miles to the South of Demirhissar, we could safely take a short cut across the Piste. Either he overrated our ability to steer a course, or was guilty of the Greek failing of always trying to please the stranger by minimising difficulties—a characteristic shared

with the Irish. Be that as it may, we spent many adventurous hours lost on the Piste. This is the flat malarial plain formed by the Struma; there are no roads across it, only a bewildering maze of intersecting bullock and cattle tracks. Then we followed a well-beaten path, hoping it might be the principal direction; actually it terminated at a well.

The shepherd by the well was watering his flock, gathered thirsting around him. Seeing us he paused, not surprised at the sight of a big foreign car, as he should be, but amused. This man had a sense of humour which, quite unbecomingly, he now indulged by laughing uproariously at us. We failed to see the joke; did not attempt to. We were lost and hot. Was it that cars often turned up at his well, that created this mirth, or was it our appearance, hatless and in shirt-sleeves? We did not enquire, but laconically shouted "Salonique?" which produced another paroxysm in the clown. "Givenzne?" Ha! Ha! "Likovan?" Ha! Ha! Ha! "Yenikeui?"—that brought him to his senses. He understood, where previously he must have thought that we had come to water the car. He gave us direction along an impossible ragged path through the scrub, which we followed, and lost—but keeping generally towards the sun, arrived through fields, fortuitously, on a metalled road.

This was the famous chaussée, built at fabulous cost by the British, from Salonika, over the Beshik Dag, to Seres, to serve our army in its advanced positions during the war. The road metal was a foot deep, we had heard, and the surface in the bad days of strife was perfect; the talk of the countryside. Now, in the piping times of peace we found great potholes had spread like an eczema! Still it remains a fine road, and so, dodging the worst of many yawning cavities, we sped along the Via Britannica with the throttle more widely open than it had been for many a day. The British road ascends some 2,000 feet in fifteen miles, an average gradient of 1 in 13, and then it rises and falls for twenty miles more into Salonika.

There were long gradients of 1 in 9, and even of 1 in 5. It is a road commanding magnificent views.

Here and there on the adjacent spurs are the new bungalow towns erected by the Commission established in 1923 to house the 1,400,000 refugees who fled from Asia Minor to escape the wrath of the Turk and the smoking ruins of Smyrna. Throughout Macedonia we saw many more of these new settlements populated by groups of refugees from the same villages, and given the old names. It is one of the curiosities of our times how the illiterate peasants were able to locate each other after arriving pell mell at various Greek ports, and to collect together once more into the same communities.

It was a wonderful but roasting drive over Beshik Dag. We paused at Likovan at the hill-top, where bottles of cold beer were produced from the well which sank through the floor of the bar. The room was half-filled with melons; the juiciest of melons, as we can vouch.

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Through the maze of people and traffic we threaded our way into Salonika to the cross-roads where the four principal streets meet just before gaining the sea front. Here, unbeknown to Peter, who drove, we were expected to describe a circle around the policeman who stood on a raised platform in the centre of the street, a solid refuge where he was safe from the struggling mass of carts, cars, dogs, donkeys, and barrows. It was a form of merry-go-round on the London principle, and we wondered if the idea in the great metropolis had not been taken from Salonika. The difference in the method lies in the lofty position of the policeman who waves his arms, flourishes a truncheon, and yells commands in a language that is either not understood or not heeded.

The traffic rules in Salonika are a study in themselves; if you arrive at a street corner and wish to go to the right you hoot once, if to the left twice, if you are intent on going straight ahead, thrice. So you have a medley of cars arriving at the corners, all hooting and none knowing which way the other wants

to go ; for one's desires as conveyed by the hooter are drowned in the frantic noises of those who want to get on with it. To us it was refreshing, and despite the drawbacks of the system and its too frequent thrills we survived the ordeal, but do not recommend its adoption in London.

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So we came to Salonika on the shores of the Ægean, the city of the ancient Greeks, for the origin of which we must go back into the mists of antiquity. It was a noted place for hot springs in the days of the Romans and, although Alexander the Great infused into it a certain amount of life, Salonika only began to live and flourish when the Romans came with their colonizing and constructive genius ; in fact, it became second only to Rome itself.

What workers they were, these Romans ! They threw up huge fortifications and built the Via Egnatia from Durazzo in Albania through Salonika to Constantinople,—like the old Watling Street of Britain—that continued the highway from Rome and opened the way for commerce, enabling them to tap the resources of this land of plenty, as it was then. At the same time, mindful of the arts as ever, they encouraged the drama by erecting a number of theatres at Salonika. When most of the improvements had been completed Cicero paid the town a visit, prior to which St. Paul had been there, Thessalonica as it was then, and his narrative lives for ever.

Up to A.D. 700 Salonika was the goal of numerous raiders such as the Huns, Avars, Goths, and Visigoths, all intent on loot and plunder, for the city and district were granted autonomy under the Romans early in the first century, perhaps the earliest example of Home Rule.

The riches and prosperity of the place, and its value as a roadstead for ships, drew every type of invader, the Bulgars coming down from the north, the Arab corsairs paying it a visit more than once from the shores of northern Africa, looting and burning the city and carrying off its youth and beauty. Finally the Turks came in, an opportunity

presenting itself for intervention as the result of civil war. They threw out the Venetians who were at the moment in occupation, and the city remained under the Turkish heel until 1913 when the Treaty of Bucharest, after the Balkan War, removed it from the Sultan's possession.

Salonika probably comes very near the top in the list of thrills and adventures that have befallen the great places of the earth. Besides invaders by land and sea it has had fire, death, and pestilence in every shape and form, storms have wrecked it, earthquakes have engulfed it, and hailstones the size of walnuts have battered its houses and people. Plague has dogged it on many an occasion and during the nineteenth century a flight from the town of every man woman, and child who could move, alone saved the city from complete extinction.

Passing on to our own time, we come to 1917, when the Allies decided to occupy this gateway of the Balkans, and it became the chief base of a motley collection of the armed forces of many nations. Then in August of that year the greatest fire in its history occurred and burnt out three-quarters of the city. It started as these things usually do in a careless way; a tiny shop in a poor quarter of the town where the building material was like matchwood, and a primitive oil lamp made from a wad of wool stuck in a shallow bowl of oil. The lamp was knocked over, set fire to some matting and that was the beginning of the great fire of Salonika. Thereafter it roared on until it burnt itself out, the commercial quarter being entirely destroyed. Luckily for the people, the British and French forces were able to come to the rescue and thousands of the homeless were fed from the allied food stores.

Salonika is a regular babel of tongues; during our stay there we must have heard at least a score, from English, French, and German down to Greek, Bulgar, and Bedouin, for the Arabs of the coast and the interior are represented in this polyglot port.



Photo Authors

BY A WATER-HOLE WE FOUND ENCAMPED GREEKS FROM ASIA MINOR



Photo Authors

A MACEDONIAN BRIDGE THAT KEPT THE ROAD OPEN THROUGH

CURIOUS CONTRASTS

Since the last fire the principal streets are made up of shops and houses in the mushroom stage, some of them little removed from the shanty type. The fire, however, has purged the city and a new, better and finer Salonika is arising from the ashes. As we drove through the town there were innumerable heaps of bricks and mortar and builder's refuse to dodge. The roads are consequently much cut up, they are thronged with life and colour, vehicles of all kinds from ox-wagons and motor-cars to two-wheeled pony carts and wheelbarrows, whilst in the crowd are old men and maidens, veiled women of the East cheek by jowl with ladies wearing smart Parisian costumes and high-heeled shoes, donkey boys, post-card sellers, water carriers, and wild-looking hillmen from the mountains to the north, who carry daggers stuck in their belts, to which they can appeal when an argument goes against them.

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On reaching the Hotel Mediterranean Palace we found cards from M. M. of the Greek Touring and Automobile Club, with whom we were soon enjoying a chat under an awning on the roof, refreshed by something out of a bottle as well as by the cool breeze off the sea ; the heat and burden of the day now only a memory. Humanity loves contrasts ; in fact, the beautiful things of life could not be discerned without the ugly. Life perhaps is dull in Arcady and we on earth are the lucky ones.

It is probably contrasts of this nature that make a Balkan tour so enjoyable. There is an element of roughing it at times, and encountering stark nature and ill-concealed cruelties, but such experiences make us more contented with our normal lot. We return home from the adventure realizing that there is nothing very wrong with the world we live in, and we retain a proper appreciation of the difficulties of others.

M. M. welcomed what we had to relate, much of our criticism met with his approval, and he promised good cheer for those who follow our trail. Schemes for sign-posting and road improvement are in the offing. The country has had

great difficulties. Salonika for instance, has doubled and trebled in population. The town and Macedonia are thronged with refugees who do not yet pay their way, and all this has placed an unexpected burden of traffic on the roads. "Imagine" he said, "if England had had eight million people, destitute and broken in spirit, landed in its midst in 1923, how would she, for all her wealth and resources, have borne the burden?" That graphically portrays one of the Grecian post-war problems, and accounts not merely for the conditions of the roads but for many of the difficulties of travel. M. M. believes that automobilism will develop rapidly as the highways improve, and spoke enthusiastically of the wild beauties of the country we were about to traverse, and of the splendour of the Bigla Pass near which are the headwaters of all the rivers of Macedonia and Epirus. He warned us, and not without reason, to beware of bridges and culverts which might happen to have departed plank by plank to boil the kettles of wandering comitadjis and sundry refugees.

There are comitadjis in the hills, but their purpose is purely political or some exclusive quarrel with a Balkan enemy. "The old idea still holds good up there," M. M. said, pointing towards the heights, "that direct action is the surest way of righting political disagreement or pursuing some irredentist cause."

* * * *

A friend with discreet and extensive knowledge of Salonika took us in hand and showed us the purlieus of this great and growing city.

The bazaars of the city, that part of it devoted to native shops and commerce, are where the life of the place can be studied to effect. As already stated, it is a cosmopolitan centre in which Greeks and Turks and the Levantine element predominate; the shops without fronts, being cavern-like openings with the goods displayed on a raised platform amongst which the shopkeeper is seated. It is a curious mixture,

for the articles for sale are in baskets and shallow bowls and alongside them will be the cups and platters from which the owner eats, the pipe he smokes, and behind the tiny throne on which he is installed are his account books and cash-box, with the abacus or mechanical reckoner of the East, on which he totals up the sum due from a purchaser.

The life in these byways of Salonika is full of interest and mystery. There is no suggestion of keeping up appearances, nor is any effort made to practise crude social deceptions. The inner life is as bluntly laid open as is the engine of a motor car when it is taken down. The shopkeeper, for instance, has his meals amongst his goods, and at the close of it he washes his mouth out with the freedom and noise of the East and casts the contents of his wooden bowl into the street.

Then there are the pedlars who are a form of walking shop, for they carry what they have for sale in baskets slung on poles, or if a baker, the bread is carried on a stick or threaded by a cord. The customer chooses what he requires, the roll is removed and put in his pocket and the baker turns to the next client. There are the purveyors of sweet drink who carry the beverage in a pitcher on their heads; when a thirsty customer demands a drink, they take down the pitcher, fill up the only cup and the customer drains it off. The latter is perhaps a grimy porter on the quayside but it makes no difference to the next, who may be a priest of the Orthodox Church or the proprietor of the local cinema.

The sweetmeat seller often carries his stock in trade in the pockets and voluminous folds of his dress, from which he will extract buns, cakes and oily-looking confections with the skill of a conjuror. The customer may sit down on the roadway to eat his cake whilst the vendor is producing the change from the stock of coins that he carries in his mouth.

In the principal streets are shops of the modern variety filled with a collection of European goods, and a wide range

of "souvenirs" some of which appear to have originated in Birmingham, the source of supply to so many of the bazaars in the East.

Our hotel was on the front by the blue sea that stretched away below our windows with the light of a thousand boats in the harbour, and the traffic of a score of nations gliding across its placid waters.

There was a restaurant on the roof and we sat at a table by the balustrade whilst the Greek waiter bustled around and brought us good wine, chicken exquisitely roasted, and yaorit-cream, both sour and fresh, sugared and prepared in a way which none but a Greek could contrive. We wondered when next we should eat in similar comfort. Not in Macedonia, or Albania. Then where—and when?

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If the roads are any criterion of the stormy career of Salonika and the innumerable armies that have lumbered through it for the past two thousand years, it must have been a strenuous time. Never in a motoring experience of twenty-two countries have we tackled such a road as the beginnings of that leading from Salonika towards the Albanian frontier. It was a case of into one pothole and out of it into the next; some of them were two feet deep, and about as much across, but by dint of keeping our tempers and sticking to the work in hand we managed to cover eighty-seven kilometres the day we left the city to traverse Macedonia on our way to the land of brigands and romance—Albania.

The episode of the 500 drachmae note bore no relation to Greek enterprise, but there was a trick in it and the trick had been played a thousand miles from Greece by an alien money-changer. At a certain capital we sold sterling and bought money in 500 drachmae notes. For the first of these, when tendered in payment at a dealer of antiques, the change seemed grossly inadequate. We suspected fraud, but were rapidly disillusioned. "Look how the end of this note has been cut off, there was the capital levy in Greece and notes were reduced

in value by government decree and by a cut of the scissors from 500 to 375 drachmae." So it proved to be.

What an idea! But we hope this publicity will not lead the Chancellor of the Exchequer to initiate a scheme of "bobbing" our Bradburys or manicuring our half-crowns. We hope not, and take no responsibility if he does.

There were gangs of refugees knapping stones and repairing the exit from Salonika that leads to the wilds of Macedonia. This was one of the many relief works in progress about the city—and the relief will be shared by the motorist so soon as the task is finished. In the meantime the traffic must lurch heavily along the chaussée, often marooned when the holes are too deep for the draught of oxen or donkeys, while clouds of dust rise in protest to heaven. The imagination staggers at the condition of this Great West Road after heavy rain; it would be impossible to negotiate it at all.

Throughout the journey to the Vardar our full attention was occupied steering a course along this highway, and we remembered how it had been the pride of the engineers responsible for this portion of the front during the war.

Eight miles out from the town the River Gallikos is reached. On the A.A. route sheet there was a footnote "Wooden bridge in poor condition," which exactly described the rickety structure. And so we forded the river, noting for the information of others that there is a new bridge approaching completion.

The one redeeming feature of this appalling road is that it can often be dispensed with by taking to the Piste and following crazy paths, through the fields and across the plain. There are, however, cavernous holes that have formed in the sandy surface and the ruts frequently exceed in depth the clearance of the car. So far as the eye can reach, the Piste extends southward, but to the north the low Moglena hills frame the horizon.

Beyond the Vardar is a new refugee village—a regular "tin town" reminding us of the mining or lumber townships we had both seen in Australasia, the resemblance enhanced by the torrid

sun blazing down on the corrugated iron roofs. Judging by appearances, these fugitives from the avenging Turk would almost prefer to risk his wrath and enjoy again their fatter lands, from which they had been dispossessed in Asia Minor, to eking out an existence, unwanted, in this region of rock and swamp. The scourge of malaria must be fought unceasingly here and the risk of falling victim to it is great. With mosquito net and regular doses of quinine, one may remain untouched, but these specifics are not freely at the disposal of the peasants, who have recourse, as an alternative, to a liberal indulgence in garlic or, as a substitute, onions. To us, this cure would be worse than the disease, but the peasants enjoy it and find therein the additional virtue of counteracting the lethargy produced by the tropical conditions of life.

When motoring in these regions precautions must be taken against sickness. The sun inclines the stranger to dress in the lightest of clothing. This is harmless if some undergarment be retained to absorb the perspiration, and either a pad or puggaree to protect the head and spine. Thirst must be fought, rather than gratified, until after sundown, when a cup of Turkish coffee, or a little water, will relieve the distress more effectively than heavy potations. Contaminated water must be avoided and, if in doubt, it should be boiled before drinking. We found that, in moderation, beer was harmless and stimulating, though as a quencher it is overrated. Fruit eaten too often is the cause of misery to many a tourist. Unaccustomed to much of it, he indulges freely in grapes and melons which are bought for a trifling sum; and soon he may be in the grip of colic. "Eat less fruit" at first, is a good slogan in sunny lands, and before eating always wash it.

We kept in the best of health throughout and attribute this largely to the fact that we breakfasted usually on rolls, butter and coffee only, lunched lightly and reserved the meal of the day for the evening. In fact we had more physical exercise than in England, ate less, slept less, and improved in condition.

This aside is prompted both by our previous experience in

THE EXPLOSIVE BASKET

various parts of the world and also by what we noticed regarding the state of public health in eastern Europe. In some of the countries traversed the mortality among small children is appalling, and the elders often contract diseases traceable to lack of knowledge of health laws, as well as absence of proper sanitation. Dust, flies, heat and drought are contributory causes to illnesses not prevalent in Western Europe. On the other hand the Balkan races are as sturdy as one would expect where neither nature nor man tolerates the existence of the weaklings. They testify to the law of the survival of the fittest.

The road improved after crossing the Vardar and we opened up but not for long. Suddenly a cry of "look out;" a grinding of brakes, a long skid and the car came to rest on the edge of a bridge that was not all there. In fact there was very little of it; merely the stringers, the planks having been quietly borrowed to keep the home fires burning. Had we blinked an incautious eye at that psychological moment, the car would have somersaulted—and the reader might have been spared this tale. At Kortcha, a few days later, the British Vice-Consul told us of a crash he had on this very road, a year previously, due to a gaping bridge.

It was only in keeping with this land of violent contrasts that we should select an inadequate tree on the unspeakable plain under an intolerable sun as the locale for our first picnic; and, as it was to prove, our last. The lunch basket had had a joy-ride around Europe extending over 3,500 miles without once justifying its existence; and we had come to treat it with contempt. Here was its chance to make good.

The basket came back safely to England, content that it vindicated its good name and the reputation of its class by supplying us with rolls and butter, dangerously ripe cheese and mouldering biscuits, on a sweltering day in Macedonia. Let the reader judge between it and us.

While we ate this Spartan meal, there was nothing to relieve the monotony of the landscape except some neighbourly water

buffalo, but lately emerged from a mudbath; dripping, slimy, repulsive. Truly this was a wonderful picnic.

Throughout the Balkans, the water buffalo is a common sight on the roads. A leering and ugly beast, with its raking horns, its head held low and thrust forward, it works harder and faster than its cousin, the common ox, especially in wet ground. But it has an unfortunate propensity for lying down at moments that suit only its own convenience and delights in following the latest device of the beauty culturists by wallowing in mud for hours. Sometimes one comes upon a dozen of these animals all but submerged in pools by the wayside, only their heads showing above the uninviting liquid, but a dreamy, contented look in their eyes.

After lunch, a smoke and a siesta, we proceeded slowly, pausing at Yenidje Vardar to view what once had been a Turkish village. Its old tenants are now in Turkey, sent there in exchange for the repatriated Greeks. It was late in the day before we had accomplished the fifty odd miles to Vodena (Edessa) which hangs on the edge of a tableland 600 feet above the plain, whence we had ascended steeply, and occupies a position of great strategic value. Its setting is delightful, with the Nisia Voda flowing by, fed by numerous sparkling waterfalls from the spurs of the Chakirka Mountain. There are tall cliffs in the neighbourhood, clothed in a riot of wild pomegranate, vines, fig, and mulberry, with fine upstanding trees to complete the frame of this town of the foothills.

Vodena has a population of over 10,000 of Greeks, Bulgars, Albanians, Serbs and Vlachs. Most of this polygot multitude gathered in our honour as we approached. Doubtless we were a novel sight. Obviously we were strangers; perhaps officials and, if so, our coming must have political significance. "Let us investigate," they seemed to say with one accord. Beyond the fountain at the cross-road further progress became difficult, and so we made a virtue of necessity, stopped and mounting a soldier from the garrison as guard over the car, went off to photograph the picturesque old tiled houses, the booths and

other objects, leaving the populace to swat flies and to continue their guessing as to who and what we were.

Whoever steers a course from Salonika to Kortcha in Albania, must either break his journey at Vodena or cover another fifty miles to Florina, or make the entire journey of 149 miles in one day, which latter it is a pity to attempt, both on physical grounds and because the glories of this drive demand leisure. As the accommodation at Vodena is poor the choice falls on Florina. This was our objective, for we had friends in the town and meant to enjoy their company as well as the scenery and experiences by the way.

The drive to Florina is an easy run rising steadily to Lake Ostrovo which stretches a full ten miles south-east. Skirting the shore the road presently began to ascend steeply; at times we hung as on a shelf above the lake; an uncomfortable shelf, lumbered by rocks and soil which had slipped down in bygone days so that driving demanded the utmost care and judgment. Traffic is rare along this road, local wants being served by the railway, which joins Florina not only to the port of Salonika, but also to Monastir and Belgrade in Yugo-Slavia. The road is of secondary importance and fallen into decay since the days when it was a vital communication for the Allied armies holding the line from the Adriatic to Salonika with a mixed force of Italian, Greek, Serbian, French and British.

It was when we had paused to photograph the lake from a point of vantage a thousand feet above it, and had wandered a little from the car, that we first realized the significance of an earlier warning by an Athens friend, "Beware the sheep-dogs." One encounters all sorts of yapping dogs in a pilgrimage around Europe; just ordinary curs, such as used to run out and bark in England before the cars became too numerous for them, and the novelty of the sport had died. These do not matter, but the Macedonian anti-thief sheep-protecting man-eater is of different calibre. His bite is worse than his bark. A shepherd tends his sheep through the twenty-four hours and his dogs are trained to attack marauders, whether four

or two-legged. Unhappily, for all their intelligence, they cannot tell a tourist from a robber and being first cousins to the wolf, it is well not to have an argument with them in the solitude of a Macedonian valley.

The shepherds are cheery and seem glad to see the traveller. They graze their flocks on the uplands and undulating plains, and their huge shaggy-haired dogs often charged down on us. Once we had as many as six, which the genial shepherds kept at bay whilst we tried to hold converse in a mixture of languages. Their dogs are valuable and the chief item in a marriage settlement. Shortly before our advent a traveller had shot one when it rushed at him ; to kill a man might be excused but a sheep-dog was a different matter—and so the traveller paid the extreme penalty of his rashness.

During the next few days we were often surrounded by these delightful pets. As the car appeared they would race across the fields and fly at it with a daring born of inexperience, jumping up and finally biting the tyres in impotent rage, filling the valley with their full-throated barks. We had to avoid running over them, especially on our own account, for with their great girth, they might derange the steering and plunge us to destruction.

Our note on the route sheet for the journey from Vodena to Florina reads :— “Magnificent rock and mountain scenery. Successive climbs and descents. Some very severe gradients of 1 in 6. With few exceptions easy corners, but road broken up in many places by washouts beyond the lake. Many slips. Great care necessary in places ; many unguarded precipices. But mostly a fast road except in middle stage.”

This is a fair description, as was the official bulletin of unhappy memory during the war that there had been a “certain liveliness” at so and so. But it does not express the personal sensation. It conveys no impression of the prolonged finesse involved in reaching our destination, nor does it relate the episode of Rocky Gulch.

The sun was getting low as we climbed slowly past the lake



Photo Authors

THE SHADOWS LENGTHENED AS WE LEFT LAKE OSTROVO



Photo Authors

A TIGHT CORNER ABOVE LAKE OKHRIDA

and plunged northward into this valley, above which towered the steep limestone slopes of the Nidje Planina for more than 7,000 feet. The road had been getting steadily worse, the surface a litter of loose stone and rocks, and half eroded by the winter rains. Presently, the way narrowed until we found ourselves on a shelf with the mountain on one side and a precipitous drop to the bed of the dried-up stream on the other. Then at a corner the road came to an abrupt end; only the rocky bed of the stream lay ahead. We halted and explored beyond the corner. The road had vanished, eaten up by some tremendous flood and all that remained was a boulder-strewn waste. Seemingly we were at the end of all things. The map showed that, possibly, we had taken the wrong fork, before climbing around the lake, and were now on a route rendered derelict when the frontier, that lay five miles to the north, had, perhaps, been re-aligned after the war. With the shadows lengthening and a profound silence on all things, broken occasionally by a tinkling sheep bell, or as dogs answered each other across the hills above us, we debated the point. If we built up some stones we could get the car through, but suppose that we did this, and if the road in fact petered out a few miles ahead, we would find ourselves benighted in one of the most disturbed parts of the world, where comitadjis roam and unreported "incidents" occur.

When we could find no tyre or wheel marks to prove the passage of other cars or carts we decided we must return, and descending to the lake, seek the proper road. Turning the car was not easy, but at last we retraced our steps and, coming to a soft place, dismounted and sought for the "spoor" of other motors; sought and found one, faintly showing. That settled it. We would chance this being the way to Florina, and so back we went to the scene of our cogitation and applied ourselves to manual labour; feverishly piling rock on rock until there was a causeway of sorts that carried the car across without mishap, and gave us entry into Rocky Gulch.

Towards the end of summer, darkness falls rapidly in Macedonia. Among these hills the gloom was profound, but our headlamps forced a way through the gorge, bringing the stony path and rocks into fantastic proportions. Occasionally a silent figure would appear, shrinking behind a bush, but we stopped to ask no questions, until twinkling lights against a shadow of hills proved we were on the correct road and that Florina was in sight.

Florina's most reputable hotel is the Acropolis, but it was crammed to the roof with officials and officers, and so we waited while the proprietor hunted for M. Basil E——. This Balkan system of scouting for one's friends has much to commend it. It is so simple. One drops into a chair at the café, beckons an attendant, orders refreshment and gives him the name of the person sought. Between the lighting and the smoking of a cigarette the quarry has been tracked down and brought along. The mountain comes to Mahomet.

M. E—— showed true native hospitality and positively enjoyed the task of finding us rooms, though the best he could do was an obscure inn of mean exterior.

Throughout the Balkans the café you frequent signifies your politics and the various cliques have different rendezvous where issues of the day are discussed over successive cups of Turkish coffee and a chain of cigarettes. There is no better tobacco than that introduced by the Turk throughout Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania. The Turk has gone but the tobacco industry remains, the product being widely marketed over the world, not always under its national name.

We liked Florina. The hotel might be humble, but vastly superior to what one would expect in the mountain fastnesses of Macedonia; the scene of so many tragedies and domestic griefs, with their world-shaking reactions. There may be few costumes of note to be seen in the town or on the roads, but idle fellows telling their beads, rough peasants, and beasts of burden, give a sufficiently distinctive character to the scene.

Florina lies at the entrance to a deep valley in a corner where the Serbian and Albanian frontiers join. Just now it enjoys prosperity as the railhead to which manufactured goods from all over the world come to south Albania through Salonica. On the road we saw girders from an English steel-foundry being taken up through the hills towards Kortcha in Albania.

The difficulty of Albanian transportation is well illustrated by this, that though great quantities of olives are consumed in the north and imported from Italy, the latter obtains the same product from south Albania by sea from Salonika and Florina. Possibly these are the self-same olives, that have made a journey of 900 miles, whereas from source to destination the direct route is about 150 miles.

There is a garrison at Florina and a ruined Turkish citadel. There is periodical excitement and every now and then an "incident" occurs. The Serbian frontier is only nine miles away, so if men with a grudge and rifles can locate their quarry, shots ring out, a figure sags to the ground and others vanish through the hills.

At the moment the Balkans are peaceable, and though pessimists say "Balkan peace presages that trouble is brewing," there is little to justify the assertion. The trouble is that of interspersed population. There are millions of Vlachs of "Roman" stock and also vast numbers of Bulgarians, Albanians and Serbians living in countries other than their own. Macedonia is a babel in miniature, and the various nationalities mingle without mixing, and keep alive national objectives which they pursue by irredentist methods and intrigue. The slogan of self-determination preached by Versailles idealists has taken hold among the irreconcilables, but it cannot be applied without injustice to others. In the Balkans self-determination would mean the extermination of opponents.

A noisy crowd in an Irish town attracted the attention of a visitor—"What is the trouble," he enquired. "Faith, they are forcing Casey to join the volunteers," was the reply. A great deal of the trouble in various sections of Macedonia

arises from attempts to force aliens to comply with repugnant regulations.

Greece since 1912 has had a sequence of war, calamity and revolution, but she appears to be winning through, and if the prevailing peace lasts for a few years, possibly the old trouble will not recur. The district of Florina certainly has an air of contentment. It benefits by the trade that follows the railway, and the good crops grown on the Monastir plain. Our stay in the town left us with an impression of stability, and though this may be superficial judgment, the apparent facts support it.

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There was a very wonderful dawn the day we left Florina. At five o'clock we were breakfasting on the footpath, with the car alongside being loaded with luggage and petrol. Our friend had joined us and we smoked a last cigarette in his company before setting forth on the twin adventures of climbing to the Bigla Pass and beyond that entering the most romantic corner of Europe—Albania. The air was like champagne and a cure in itself. The car ran like a dream and rarely had we felt in better fettle. Just beyond the town the road begins the winding ascent of sixteen kilometres to the summit. Mile after mile we climbed; the gradients at times steepening to 1 in 5. Presently Florina disappeared from sight, and from the summit at 4,500 feet one could look down on hamlets far below, with forests of fir and pine mantling the peaks. There is fine hunting around here. Five miles to the west is Lake Ventrok, eleven miles long. Further on is Lake Priespa, eighteen miles in length, and beyond that again is Okhrida with a twenty mile shore. This is one of the wildest parts of Europe, where three nations meet, and a haven for wild life—including the human variety.

By a crag across the valley we could see an eagle circling lazily, but its prey was invisible. Perhaps around us there were human eagles, invisible to our eyes, but watching our movements with interest.

THE MIGHTY BIGLA PASS

It is not certainly a land of robbers, as those who visit the shrine on the summit of the Bigla Pass can testify. Here in an exposed cavity is an ikon and in front of it coins placed by the peasantry. We added to the collection, and wondered how long in our country money might lie at a roadside, immune from clutching fingers. Presently a shepherd lad approached and snatched hungrily at some money we gave him. But for all his poverty there is no risk of his touching the offerings on the shrine.

The Bigla Pass was an important link in the Allied front during the war, and this fact added interest to the descent, which continues steadily for thirteen kilometres, where, at a road-junction, one must keep across a river bridge. After this there is a stream to follow for ten kilometres to the Greek Customs post. After a glance at our papers they invited us to coffee and so, with mutual expressions of goodwill we passed on from Greece to Albania, the unknown.

CHAPTER VIII

ALBANIA—SOUTH TO NORTH

OUR arrival at Albania brought the guard tumbling out to salute the Union Jack, for the government had sent instructions for a free passage and every facility. These Albanian soldiers were small, but well equipped with a workmanlike uniform of greenish khaki, and carried rifles of the old Lee-Enfield pattern.

Twelve kilometres farther on we arrived at Bilishti where an official ran to bar the way, saluted us, glanced at the passports, and salaamed.

On our way down we had seen that the most surprising sight was the heavy work of reconstruction on the Greek side of the frontier. Greece realizes that the road from Florina to Kortcha must be kept in good order if she is to retain valuable traffic of merchandise from Salonika to Albania, and of produce in the other direction. For this reason, the motorist has good travelling down to Kortcha. It is a fair road with many scenes of interest. There are mosques, Mohammedans in fez and baggy trousers, the quaintest little children, and wild sheep-dogs without number.

There was threshing of grain in the fields where it had stood, both by flails and also with horses, and on a hillside we saw a cloaked figure—a shepherd, complete with rifle and bandolier, leaning against a rock which served him as shelter from both sun and foes.

For us a significant experience was the red fox which

slunk across in front of the car. It is an Albanian saying that for a red fox to cross one's path in the morning is a sign of good-luck. Certainly our luck continued throughout Albania.

The red fox was not long in moulding fate to our advantage. We knew that there was a British Vice-Consul at Kortcha and we needed his help in discovering a caravanserai, for this was not a thing to be decided lightly in a land with a reputation for bugs and bandits. The fox's first effort was to put at our disposal a corner-boy speaking English who, standing on the running board, directed us to a Mohammedan café in a street just wide enough to hold the car and the flies that swarmed around the garbage thrown in the gutter. Our desire for food evaporated, and so we began with wine, sending our guide with cards to the Consul. The British Diplomatic and Consular service is always efficient, and when Mr. P. arrived, he spirited us from the sight of the disciple of the Prophet to his own domicile. Our kaleidoscopic tour was to show us a new pattern of life; from day to day, the roads, peoples, languages, money, and experiences had changed. The life and the inwardness of things in Kortcha would now be revealed to us by one who knew them as they were, and not merely as they seemed.

Though Kortcha itself is largely Christian, the surrounding country is almost wholly Mohammedan, the land being held by Begs under a system which is almost feudal. It is rare for a stranger to come to Kortcha, but when he does Nick should be his guide. Nick is an Albanian who speaks good English and knows, not merely what there is to see but also the oblique devices necessary to see it. Under his tutelage we visited the markets, *inter alia*, where business was in full swing. Here was the fruit market with more melons than one could count between the rising and setting of the sun, and there the shoe market with footwear suited to the rough going in Albania, but not such as civilized man could endure. The latest mode is a shoe made from old Dunlop tyres. The cover is taken and

the bead removed, front and back being then laced together and stitched. There is no attempt at shaping it to the foot, the latter being left to conform to the trough within the shoe. Albanians are proud of their footwear, and apart from the tyre variety, one can buy leather clogs, with upturned toes, and huge pom-poms for decoration, the soles being sprigged with dozens of nails. Between the stocking and the shoe, a gay foot-sock is worn, knitted in the brightest of colours. We also visited the grain market, with the peasants squatting in rows before open sacks and a crowd causing pandemonium in a manner entirely Eastern and probably effective, though the efforts seemed worthier of a greater cause. We saw the potters, where boys tread the clay, and the master sits at his wheel making pots in the old-fashioned style. Master and apprentices sleep on a shelf above the shop, which opens entirely so that air may enter during the stifling nights of summer.

After the market, came special dancing on an open space in the town, the men playing on a bagpipe reminiscent of the Scottish model. Peasant dances are not always interesting, and this, though not lacking in energy, was not to be compared with the Romanian style.

Then we were initiated into the wine trade in Albania.

Wine maketh glad the heart of man, but to see the evolution of it may send him to join the resolute army of prohibitionists, as witness how 'tis oft-times made in Albania :—

The scene, a courtyard in Kortcha. Enter a panniered donkey led by a youth, powdered by dusty roads traversed since morning, on his way from the sunny hill where the grapes he brings had ripened ; great luscious grapes, the bloom of their perfection as yet undisturbed. Enter next the President (perhaps) of Ye Ancient Order of Master Vintners, complete with steelyard. The grapes are weighed. There is a haggling, but a price is agreed and paid over, the grapes cast into a tub and Master Vintner follows them, having first removed



SCUTARI

Photo : Authors



A MERCHANT OF KORTCHIA

Photo : Authors



A MOUNTAIN LAD

Photo : Authors



DISTAF

Photo : Authors

FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF ALBANIA

HOW THEY MAKE WINE IN ALBANIA !

his shoes and stockings. He marks time upon them awhile, pressing out the juice until all is ready for the next process.

“ Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.”

Leaving the vintner we nearly came to grief in the street of the coppersmiths, over an argument about a cattle-bell which we desired to purchase. Nick agreed with us that the price was high, and told the shopkeeper so in forcible Albanian. The conversation grew more emphatic, until we were in the midst of a shouting and gesticulating throng, most of whom sided with the shopman, and it was a matter of physical as well as verbal effort, to extricate ourselves ; after which, in a state of perspiration, we disappeared, exhausted, into a Turkish coffee shop, and rested awhile.

A coffee shop will have two or three tables, and for the rest a floor some eight feet square raised above the ground level. On this the peasants squat in silent patience, while the coffee is prepared. No one hurries ; the day is always young and time was made only for slaves.

There is amazing variety in the shifting scenes at Kortcha, with costumes that you would not expect to see outside a picture book. On market day the peasant dons his finery to impress the townsmen. One may see a young farmer in white homespun, a huge coat of lambskin, with the wool inside, and on his head a white fez, his feet cased in shoes of the upturned toe. Beside him is a woman in a curious type of top hat with a vogue in the district. There are men wearing the heavily embroidered and piped tunic which is the height of fashion, especially if a double astrakhan hat be worn.

The various costumes have a significance, to discern which long residence in the country is necessary.

In the opinion of Mr. P., southern Albania has resources which will rapidly expand as communication is opened up. There are no railways in Albania, except twenty miles under

construction from Durazzo to the capital at Tirana, and the country must rely on roads and motor transport.

To reach Tirana from Kortcha a circuitous road with severe mountain conditions, as we discovered, must be followed. A new and more direct route is contemplated, enabling the Kortcha trade to flow to the port of Durazzo, instead of to Florina in Greece.

The Romans constructed the Imperial Road, the Via Egnatia from Durazzo to Constantinople, 2,000 years ago. After that date none was made, except possibly one hundred miles of indifferent track by the Turks, who wished to keep the country in a backward state rather than risk its loss by developments. The Austrian and Italian occupation during the war led to military roads being laid and these have now been added to and improved. Albania from being a *terra incognita* is now quite practicable for cars. This will be news to many, and our journey was projected to obtain information of service to automobilists. As another sign of progress, let us mention that, though at the time of our visit there was no hotel at Kortcha worthy of the name, one has since been opened. It has a bathroom.

"Derqi nuk asht ach i keq sa kujton njerezia, as Shqypetari jo." as it is expressed in Albanian, or in English "The devil is not as wicked as people believe, neither is the Albanian." To verify this one has only to appreciate the national characteristics of the Albanians, who, whatever evil habits they may have contracted, or the defects arising from long subjugation, have chivalry and courage. Cases can be quoted without number of the manner in which the Bessa—"the good faith"—is pledged to absolute strangers. All who come under protection of the Bessa, whether given by an individual or a clan, are free from molestation. This primitive institution serves to render travel in Albania safe, despite the absence of a highly developed system of policing, such as we enjoy in the west.

The Bessa of the Albanians, the three days of immunity

extended even to enemies in Arabia, and other brotherhood pledges, all have something in common, and are a manifestation of the highest human instinct.

The country is an ideal one for guerrilla fighting. Having seen it, traversed its mountain passes and gazed down its precipitous cliffs to smiling valleys far below, it is easy to understand how these sturdy mountaineers have been able to resist Turk and Slav, and hold their own through centuries of hard fighting.

With such a turbulent history it is not surprising that Albania is still a land of strange customs and primitive habits, where to an extent unknown in the rest of Europe the law of blood-vengeance is still upheld. It is the old idea of purification by blood and all else is subservient to it. Any insult or injury should be wiped out by gun or knife, and the feuds are governed by a strict code of rules.

For instance, we were assured that no man may be shot or knifed when in company with a woman, nor during the period of a truce—often arranged between two antagonists for business purposes. Then again, a couple of men may hunt one another for months, but before they actually meet face to face it is time to gather in the harvest. On this depends the food of both families until the following year. So a truce is arranged, and visiting Albania during the summer months one may find men working amicably in the same village, who, a few days later, will be stalking one another.

When you leave a homestead in Albania the host is responsible for your safety until nightfall finds you beneath the next roof; if anything untoward occurs he is bound to take drastic action, no matter what your own views may be upon the subject. If you drink with one man and are molested before sampling the flowing bowl with another, the first must wipe out the insult in blood.

When on vengeance intent the Albanian takes every opportunity of accomplishing the object, provided the above rules are observed. The parties to a feud, therefore, never

know how they may come by their end. Men have been known not to move out of their house and garden for months at a stretch.

Some of the blood feuds thus easily begun last for generations. When traversing northern Albania, one of the most unsettled parts of the country, we heard of a vendetta which had existed for four generations. The original cause seemed to have long been forgotten; all that the man, who carried it on, knew was that a male member of the family marked down must be killed. When this occurred, the rival family would, in their turn, concentrate on the task of retaliation, and so the inter-family warfare would continue. When it would eventually end no man knew.

It is not surprising that amidst such conditions many go armed. Yet it cannot be said that the Albanian is a desperate character; he is far from that, and when feuds do not disturb the village life they lead a cheery and care-free existence, and none is more hospitable. Like other remote and primitive people among whom we have lived in Asia and under the Southern Cross, they receive the stranger with a cordiality that strikes a genuine note.

* * * *

Let us now recount a strange crime that happened whilst we were in the country. For pathos it ranks with the masterpieces of Grand Guignol or the nightmares of Edgar Allan Poe.

The crime in question could not have happened but for a trivial social fact. Many of the younger Albanians find life dull now that campaigns within and beyond their borders are at an end; temporarily at any rate. Hearing tales of the wonders of the American continent and the fortunes awaiting them there, they emigrate to the new world. There they forget the vendettas and conditions of life in the homeland, and proceed to make money in a country where guns can be forgotten and cheque books are carried instead of knives.

These and similar tales reached the ears of an Albanian lad, who, at an early age, had ambitions of becoming something

more than a mountain farmer, and of keeping his parents in their old age.

Twenty-one years before, when this lad first heard of America, emigration was still an adventure in the Near East. But the doors of the United States were open wide to all comers, and he set out for the new Eldorado.

Bidding his family good-bye, he made his way to Durazzo, the port on the Adriatic, which is Albania's front door, and from there went by steamer via Italy to New York. Amid the wonders of life in the great Republic of the West he soon forgot the turbulent little land he had left. Indeed, for several years after his arrival he had difficulty in procuring the wherewithal to live. He knew no trade, nor could he speak English, the village of his birth not aspiring to educational facilities at that time.

However, in the end fortune smiled upon him, and discovering that he possessed the gift of salesmanship, he concentrated upon the single task of collecting the capital necessary to commence in business on his own account. During the succeeding years he toiled early and late and his affairs prospered. At the end of that time he had accumulated approximately four thousand pounds sterling, which, for an Albanian mountaineer, must have meant riches beyond the dreams of avarice.

As he grew wealthier he naturally thought of the home he had left in Albania, and doubtless longed to return there in his new rôle of prosperous citizen. He reflected that his parents would now be old, perhaps they needed his help, and so turning these matters over in his mind and recalling the returned emigrants who had originally fired his ambition more than twenty years before, he resolved to set out for the homeland with his fortune.

He gave his people no notice of his impending arrival, but knew that it would be comparatively easy to trace them, and above all he wished his return to be a pleasant and dramatic surprise. How strange are the workings of fate. The desire was to be realized, in what way we shall presently see.

Carrying his savings in notes, he left America and in due course arrived at Kortcha, only a few miles from his home. There he found his sister, now a married woman, and learnt from her that their parents were still living in the old village. Intent upon keeping his return a complete surprise, he bound his sister to secrecy until she should also visit their parents a few days later, and set out on the last stage of his journey.

Arriving in the village, he found that his father was keeping the village inn. Having visited one or two old inhabitants, who apparently did not recognize him, he made his way to the inn and there came face to face with his father, who greeted him as a total stranger. He explained that he was travelling on business and wished to put up at the inn for the night. Accommodation was limited, for it happened to be market day and crowds of buyers and sellers had come in from the surrounding districts and absorbed all available rooms. The innkeeper assured him that the place was full to the rafters, and, as he listened to the excuse, no doubt he was inwardly amused at being denied a room in his own home.

In the end the innkeeper recommended the cellar, where a straw bed could be arranged if he cared to accept such an alternative. This he did, and spent the evening with the crowd of peasants and farmers in the main room, cracking jokes and making himself popular. He was well pleased with the success of his ruse and decided not to make known his identity until the following morning, as he had arranged with his sister. One by one the visitors retired to their rooms until at last only he and the old innkeeper remained.

Before retiring to the cellar he dropped a hint which would make the surprise he had planned for the morrow all the more pleasant. He hoped there would be no thieves in the place, or perhaps rats in the cellar to eat his hoard of bank notes. A few moments later he was enjoying the experience of sleeping in a straw bed for the first time for many years. He did not remain long awake, wishing to be fresh and bright in the

THE FATAL BLOW

morning, when he would reveal his identity to his parents and there would be obvious rejoicing.

The rest of the story as told to us can be easily filled in. The innkeeper had not retired, instead he sat beside the dying embers of the fire and thought of the fortune reposing in the pockets of the stranger in his cellar. A dozen times he moved to the door, putting away the temptation that beckoned him on, and each time he returned. The inn had been doing badly ; receipts had been poor and expenditure heavy, and except on weekly market days visitors were few, the local inhabitants being too poor to spend much during the evenings. The man was a total stranger and was moving on the next day. No one would miss him. How these facts and the glittering wealth must have gripped him as in a vice. It would have been so different if his son had been with him to carry on, but in all probability he would never see him again. Without that money in the cellar the future looked black indeed. With it, he and his wife could enjoy comfort for the rest of their days.

Through the dark watches of the night the innkeeper pondered, while all around him slept. Then finally he rose and picked his way silently down into the cellar. The door opened without a sound ; he peered within, and could just detect the even breathing of the stranger. Lightly discarding his shoes, he crept to the bed and gently lifted the blanket. The pale moon shone dimly through the long slit in the cellar wall that formed the only means of light and he saw that the man was lying on his back and fast asleep.

What a moment ! But this time he did not hesitate. Swiftly he drew his dagger . . . it was a decisive blow . . . the sleeper never even moaned. It was the work of a moment to transfer the money to a safe hiding place ; it was a race against time, but when the first grey streaks of dawn had crept over the mountains, the luckless stranger lay buried beneath the floor at the back of the inn and all trace of his existence had been obliterated.

Naturally, the following morning there were casual enquiries

after the young stranger who had made merry the night before, but the innkeeper replied that the traveller had paid his bill and proceeded on his journey. No one doubted his word, there was no reason to. It was, as it seemed to the innkeeper, the perfect crime. All that remained for him to do was to account for that sudden fortune and then at a suitable moment sell the inn and leave the district.

But, like so many perfect crimes, there was just one tiny clue to the tragedy that exemplifies the dictum that murder will out. For several days the innkeeper knew nothing of it. Then his daughter came to visit them.

"Where is my brother?" were her first words. "Why, in America, of course," they said. The girl shook her head. "He should be in this village," she remarked, "for he came to see me at Kortcha on his way up and made me promise not to let you know he was coming." The daughter made enquiries, but still the innkeeper was not suspicious. The girl, now thoroughly alarmed, promptly went to the local police post and sought the aid of the authorities. She explained that her brother was carrying a fortune on him and undoubtedly he had been ambushed and murdered. The police, assisted by the local magistrate, forthwith began their enquiries and soon discovered that the only stranger who had reached the village within the last nine days had spent an evening at the inn and had disappeared overnight. Everyone else was accounted for, so they concentrated on tracking the stranger who had left so abruptly that none, not even the people in the village, had seen him pass.

Of course they questioned the innkeeper, but he held fast to his story. He did not see how that could get him into trouble. but his agony of mind was terrible. When careful enquiries all the way to Kortcha failed to reveal any trace of the missing stranger the police ordered the inn to be searched. From room to room the investigators went, examining every nook and cranny of the old building. In the cellar, hidden under a pile of straw, they found a suit-case of foreign manufacture.

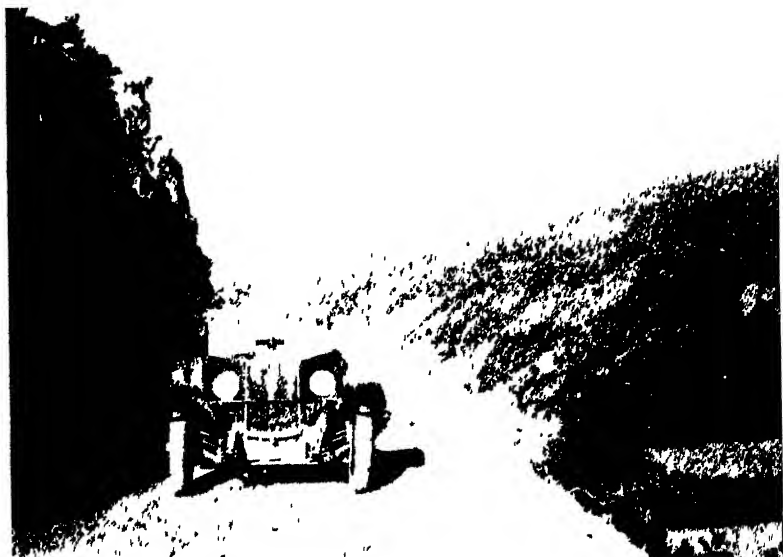


Photo Authors

IN THE HAUNTS OF WILD MEN



Photo : Authors

PRIMITIVE ALBANIAN TRANSPORT

At that moment the mystery was solved, for Albania does not import American suit-cases ; they are, indeed, rare in the country, and so a spasm of dread passed over the face of the innkeeper as he witnessed the find.

He denied all knowledge of it, but the evidence of witnesses who testified to the stranger carrying such a case, could not be shaken, and what was the explanation of its lying beneath the straw in the cellar with its locks forced open ?

One thing led to another ; presently the body was discovered and the innkeeper arrested and charged with the murder. Realizing that escape in the face of that damning evidence was hopeless, and almost insane with the thought that he had unknowingly murdered his only son, whose return he had long awaited, he confessed and told the complete story. When we left Kortcha he was about to pay the extreme penalty of his crime ; he would be hanged in the market place, leaving to his widow the fortune which, but for his overpowering greed, would have meant happiness and prosperity for the whole family.

* * * *

Before we had concluded our tour of Albania we decided that Kortcha is the most pronounced democracy in the country. The nationalist movement centred here, possibly because the people are the most educated and possess keen intelligence.

Of a population of one and a half million, the Ghegs constitute one half and inhabit the north, while the Tosks will be found south of the Shkumbi river. The difference in temperament and physique of the two races is that the northerners are taller and more warlike, while the southerners, though smaller in stature, show a greater polish. Perhaps the commercial superiority of the Tosks in the Kortcha district is derived from the educational advantages received from the schools established by the Greek Patriarch. Certainly the old Turkish government did nothing to educate the people and so the Ghegs were left to languish in abysmal ignorance, and were driven to rely on the gun to maintain their national integrity.

The Scotsman, who admitted grudgingly that the change given him at the ticket office was "only juist" correct, might be pardoned if he hesitated to go so far as that, with regard to the change he would receive for English money in Albania. In exchange for a pound we received a mixed collection in which the following figured:—a half napoleon gold piece dated 1860, an Albanian dollar and an assortment of silver and nickel; viz: a drachma (Greek), a leva (Bulgarian), a lei (Romanian), a kroner (Austrian), a dinar (Yugo-Slavian), a lira (Italian), a mark (German), together with Turkish pieces and Albanian lek. The rule of thumb method for judging the value of these is to call everything of the pre-war franc, kroner, lira, etc., denomination a corona and to say that it is worth about fourpence. An English sixpence comes within this category, so that by an exercise of patience sixty sixpences might be accumulated in Albania for the expenditure of one pound. We do not suggest this as a rapid way of making a fortune, since there are few sixpences to be found in the country.

To be more precise £1=125 leks=65 coronas=25 gold francs. Or one napoleon (called a "nap")=16 shillings=50 coronas=100 leks. The tourist is of course, handicapped in the market places for the price of an article may be quoted to him in Albanian leks or in "naps." He will draw from his pocket an assortment as above, and when mental arithmetic fails leave the rest to chance and the honesty of the trader. This agglomeration of coinage is more common in the south than in the north, while as regards gold, the banks are gradually obtaining possession of it to meet the charges on the Italian loan. The Albanian monetary system has the virtue that it has not been subject to the depreciation experienced in countries where the best financial experts are supposed to exist. We do not seek to explain the cause, being content to state the fact.

It was hard to tear ourselves away from Kortcha and our host, but when we left, the redoubtable Nick guided us out of the

town and with his aid we steered a course through streets of stampeding pack-animals and vociferous muleteers.

Lake Malik, which we passed, lies sixteen kilometres from the town, but this distance is insufficient in the opinion of Kortchans, who dread the venom of Malik mosquitoes, for when the wind blows from the north it brings them in clouds. And so the drainage operations now in progress are not the least of the blessings of the new government; but we hope that when this task is complete, the engineers will use their picks and shovels to fill up the deep depressions lying in wait across the road to trap the unwary motorist. We have painful recollections of these.

A sudden winding descent brings one to Pogradets, whose claim to notoriety is that it serves those who come to Lake Okhrida, lying 2,100 feet above sea level and equal to the finest of Italian lakes. It is an excellent site for a summer camp, with fishing and wild fowl and big game shooting. Withal, a lonely corner of the world, and a frontier for Albania, Yugo-Slavia and Greece. Across the Lake in Yugo-Slavia, a journey of three quarters of an hour, is the monastery of St. Naum where the monks welcome the visitor to their stronghold.

A high mountain, clothed in a forest of chestnut, forms the western shore of the lake, and our road began to wind up it, affording at every bend a more lofty perspective and entrancing views of the gleaming waters, wherein the high-prowed galleys of the fisherfolk moved slowly as nets were gathered or set.

The road westward is new, but where it swings away from the lake we sampled two of the sharpest corners imaginable; veritable death-traps to the incautious. After this, a traverse of a saddle in the hills, is followed by a long descent through the chestnut woods, the road winding ingeniously around bluffs and crags until it falls to the valley floor.

* * * *

The scenery is magnificent, but what is even more impressive is the thought that, through this valley, remnants of the defeated Serbian army had struggled heroically in 1915. It was

December, and mixed inextricably with the dispirited and often leaderless troops were men, women and children, who preferred to go into exile rather than face the approaching doom of the nation. Starving, cold, and ill, the mob moved slowly westward, seeking a haven on the Albanian coast, whence Allied vessels might carry them off to safety. It was fatal to stray from the main body for there were wild Albanian clansmen, with memories of old scores to settle against Serbia, and now ready to exact payment. Tens of thousands perished here and in northern Albania.

The position of Albania itself was not enviable. Here was an armed horde numbering some hundreds of thousands of starving aliens, pouring into the country in mid-winter. The prospect was one of starvation for all, the Albanians included. We, in the west, would have attempted to intern such an army, as did the Dutch. But Albania, without army or ordered Government since the flight of William of Wied in September 1914, had no power of organized resistance or possibility of controlling the situation. Small wonder, then, that the Serbian retreat was disastrous as well as heroic.

The main body retired through the passes of northern Albania and with it there marched a friend of the writers. He tells how, with his troop of twelve, he fell back from near Kraljevo on the Morava. Southward they came, inadequately clothed, through the snow for 160 miles to Prizren, threading their way amongst the litter of a broken army and a fugitive nation. Men collapsed along the route in thousands, dead and dying. Prizren was the end of the road; beyond it lay the cruel mountain ranges. Here motors and lorries came to a halt and, as each arrived it was burnt to render it useless to the advancing enemy. Faint and frozen, weak and verminous, our friend brought his hungry men up to Ipek which lies at an altitude of 1,700 feet in Montenegro; then over snowclad mountains 6,000 feet high, across crevasses and through endless perils down into Podgoritsa and on to Cetinje. At last proper food was obtained, but it was too much for their

A TERRIBLE RETREAT

weakened bodies. They developed dysentery, and the story of how they crawled down from Cetinje, and of the agonizing journey across the lake to Scutari, is a tale of crucifixion. At Scutari aeroplanes bombed the gathering refugees, and then began the struggle southward to Durazzo. Here our friend's narrative is vague. He and his little troop were semi-delirious and have only "a dazed recollection of wading breast-deep in water, and of climbing interminably from one field to another." He found the Albanians friendly. Coming one day to a cottage he asked for food, offering gold in payment. Two geese were killed for them, but the money was refused.

At Durazzo an Austrian destroyer sank all the shipping by gunfire, and when a steamer came to take off refugees, a submarine kept it prisoner until Allied naval vessels drove it under. Christmas day was celebrated at Milan, by the first bath for months.

In contrast to this, our passage was through a peaceful Albania, traversing sun-filled valleys and mountains. But it was not difficult to imagine the bitter cold of winter life in this rugged hinterland, the haunt of bear, wolves, and eagles. Albanians call themselves "Shkypetar"—the sons of the eagle. Thus were they named by Pyrrhus, the Greek, more than 2,000 years ago. They were the swiftest of his troops and famed for agility in mountain fighting.

The valley soon ended and then began one of the finest drives in all our experience, the passage of the gorges through which the river Shkumbi winds to Elbasan.

There was no motor road here before the war, and a description of a journey on foot which occupied three days from Okhrida to Elbasan reads as follows:—"The path above the lake rises up 4,000 feet and then proceeds by fearful sweeps and bends, round precipices up to 2,500 feet—and so from height to hollow, ridge to river, the tortuous path descends to the Shkumbi and Elbasan." This road is the Via Egnatia.

What there was of peril on this road has to some extent been removed, but there are many intriguing places where the

path, from its depths in stony gorges, crossing and recrossing the torrent a dozen times by curious bridges, ascends and clings to a rocky ledge along the cliff. Only at rare intervals is there passage for two vehicles, and the precipices are unguarded. But the road is motorable, and the grandeur revealed in its thirty miles of length is worth the effort of climbing the heights. It means rapid steering, the foot is ever on brake or clutch and one must snatch quickly at the gears. The passenger has the scenery to himself, and conversation is monosyllabic.

Each year the way will improve, as witness the bridges nearing completion and corners being eased.

Except for a few tiny hamlets, there are no villages. There are no vehicles either towards Elbasan but we encountered groups of peasants returning from market driving stock and pack-horses as displeased with our presence as we were with theirs. They would shy and back, and shouting peasants were swung off their feet in the effort to control the beasts, which in Albania are led only by a halter.

We have reason to remember pack-horses. Perhaps we were hurrying more speedily than either the character of this mountain road, or the native life upon it, justified. Certainly we travelled faster than we desired, but then we had dallied, and the prospect of reaching Durazzo at all was unlikely. Be that as it may, a swing around a corner found us running easily down hill. Ahead were pack animals burdened with great loads of bright stuffs bought at the market. There were a dozen men on horseback and afoot, all armed to the teeth. We are unaware what really caused the bother, but surmised, afterwards, that it was the dust we were raising. As we approached there was gesticulation, angry shouts, and rifles were unslung. He who hesitates is lost and so we drove furiously through the party, and came to Albanian, the wonder spot of this region.

We found it difficult to leave Elbasan. It is the geographical centre of Albania and the stronghold of Mohammedanism.

THE MOSQUES OF ELBASAN

The population numbers 12,000 and the town is situated within a well-wooded country on a fertile plain. There is a curious sub-division, the centre being a ruined castle with Christian Albanians, outside of which are grouped the Moslems and scattered around these the Vlachs.

Entering Elbasan is like passing from a Christian into a Mohammedan world, and the process involves a mental shock. We had been travelling steadily westward for hundreds of miles away from Salonica in the east. The influence of Mohammed should be getting less ; and so the mosques of Elbasan came as a surprise, as did the quaint bazaars, Eastern atmosphere of the place, and the narrow streets that are rivulets in the winter. In the bazaars the patient figures squatting cross-legged await the buyer who will be supplied with coffee, and after that shown the merchandise he seeks. Then arises the question of price and as likely as not the affair will result in nothing more than a waste of time ; though a pleasant waste of time at that. And yet for all its orientalism, petrol and oil are obtainable in the town.

A little care must be taken in leaving Elbasan so that the correct road for Durazzo may be found. Our remaining impression of the run to the coast is chiefly of dust rising in clouds, and seen as a white dazzle in the glare of the headlamps. There was a motor vehicle ahead of us as we ran down towards Kavaja. Its pace was not half that which we desired to travel, and the dust it made was an impenetrable and stifling wall. For miles and miles we tried to pass. The driver, experienced in dust, took care to give us no facilities, and it was only by risking a collision with peasants or ox carts, that in desperation we forced our way past him and came to the causeway into Durazzo to find a modest haven at the Hotel Splendid Palace.

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The Hotel Splendid Palace at Durazzo, despite its name, is not a " Savoy " but then it charged us only twenty-two shillings for rooms for three persons, dinner and petit déjeuner, with a

mere five per cent. for service. We deemed ourselves fortunate in finding it—and its mosquito curtains. The traveller must beware of the Durazzo mosquito and the malaria it transmits. Another vital point, of general application, is to pull down and inspect the beds and, if in doubt, insist on clean sheets. Yet another is to drink no water at Durazzo. The value of this injunction is evident when it is said that the British Legation imports drinking water in bottles from Italy.

Durazzo is best seen at night when the garishness of its more modern buildings and scars caused by earthquakes and house-wreckers are less apparent. In any case there is little to hold the visitor and unless he has business at the bank or Legation, let him get away to the hills and the unspoiled parts of Albania. Durazzo however has claim to notoriety, inasmuch as St. Paul preached here, the Romans made it their port, and it has been burnt and rent by despoilers and earthquake times without number.

Breakfast at the British Legation and refreshment at the Consulate—within the walled gardens of which the car had roosted all night—are incidents of our stay at Durazzo. They were refreshing episodes on a dry and dusty tour. Then there was Toni, the Legation dragoman, courteously lent to us as guide during our stay in the country. Toni performed miracles of organization and made arrangements for our progress which gave us an inner sight into people and things.

What has been said about Durazzo applies generally to Tirana, lying twenty-four miles inland, which was formerly little more than a large Moslem village, but now raised to the dignity of a capital. It still remains an open straggling town with the old village, like a poor relation, kept somewhat in the background, and wide open roads spreading through the new quarter. Old houses and huts have been removed to make room for the new arteries, but everything is still untidy. With the exception of the bazaar the new capital has nothing of interest. There is an air of artificiality; a borrowing of western conventions, which ill assort with picturesque



Photo Authors

AN AGE-OLD TURKISH BRIDGE IN NORTH ALBANIA
THE SCENE OF MANY FIGHTS



Photo Authors

Tirana. One thinks of new wine in old bottles and judges too that the place needs ageing before it can please. In front of the humble palace are ornamental gardens, and a bandstand on the English model. There are other signs of progress; an aerodrome, wireless station, and new hotels. We found the Continental full and so stayed at the International where everything was pseudo-modern; but the view from our window in the morning was one of a courtyard packed tight with Albanians who had passed what seemed to have been a restless night under the stars, and were still lying in a variety of grotesque attitudes.

The administration is endeavouring to transform what till 1913 had been a misgoverned and oppressed Turkish province, and during the war, was given over to the march of alien armies. Japan decided to throw off the old civilization and become western, and if to be modern and modish is success, it succeeded and in record time. The Albanians are men of intelligence and can do the same. Albanians rose to places of honour in the service of the Sultan, and the race has produced such men as Diocletian and Constantine the Great.

To quote Colonel Stirling, who advises the Government :—
 “Albania with the help of its thirty-three-year old President, Achmet Bey Zogu, is trying to rear to strength and maturity, the nation born out of the travail of the last great conflagration” and he adds “Albania offers safety and beauty to the holiday-maker, not only in highly picturesque scenery, but costumes and customs as they existed centuries back. It is the one unspoiled spot of Europe.” But for how long will the motor-tourist allow the country to remain unsophisticated?

The reassuring fact politically and economically about Albania is that its President has surrounded himself with skilled British advisers.

It was lucky for us that modern business methods have not entirely taken hold at Tirana. We needed money and were able—by the scouting system—to locate the bank manager who readily opened his safe at 9 p.m. and gave us what we

required. Afterwards we drank coffee at a Moslem café opposite, and talked politics well into the small hours, while soft footed peasants padded past and motor cars honked a passage.

It is difficult to realize that twelve years ago there was no road from Tirana to Scutari in the north, the traffic being confined to strings of laden beasts passing continuously along a narrow, winding pack track. When the Austrian host poured in from the north it found a road was necessary, and Russian prisoners were engaged on the work of construction. There was dreadful sickness among them, and thousands died before the task was completed.

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The contrast between the new capital and the old is great. We found the road to Kruje excellent. It winds up and around through the hills, ending abruptly in the quaint village above which is the castle of Ak-Hissar or Skanderbeg, now a picturesque ruin. Skanderbeg is the national hero, for it was he who was victorious in a score of fights in the XV century against the Turk, and who succeeded in reconciling the differences of the various Albanian tribes, so that national unity would have been achieved had there been a worthy successor to him. Unfortunately the Turk could not be withstood and he reconquered Albania, holding it continuously until 1912.

Kruje assembled to do us honour, and the local officials received us at the café, where they had a special brew of coffee and many excellent Albanian cigarettes.

The one street of the village is only seven feet wide, flanked by one-storey shops, whose tiled roofs extend downwards until they all but meet. Under these deep eaves the shopkeepers sit within their open stalls. Each is a craftsman and the manufacturer of what he sells, whilst the costumes and their colour are a revelation.

Along the crazy pavement is a jostling throng of various tribesmen, some wearing black trousers as voluminous as those of any clown, and as slack in the seat, and a short,

tight-fitting jacket, sleeveless and with a heavy fringe of black wool tassels a foot long across the shoulders. In a wide belt is thrust a revolver, magnificently engraved and mounted in silver. On the head is a black fez, if the owner be a Moslem, or white, if Christian. By a cobbled causeway a group of women were sitting; the gossips of Kruje. As they talked, they plied the distaff or knitted; but always they talked. Down the narrow street would come a donkey, half hidden beneath his load of wood or grass, whilst children darted wildly to and fro, delightfully picturesque.

This remarkable old capital is high up in the hills and cowers against a cliff rising sheer a couple of thousand feet, but the dominant feature of the village is the minaret, and, as we talked, the voice of the muezzin echoed high and musical with his call to prayer, the reminder that "God is great." Even to an "infidel" there is something spiritual in the cry.

On the tortuous descent from Kruje we encountered armed peasants, men of fine physique, handsome faces, and ready smiles. Except for temporary bridges a good road leads northward through the Marmures forest, a wide expanse of old but stunted oak, diminishing each year owing to the efforts of a German syndicate which is cutting out the timber. Crossing the Mati river by the immense six-span ferro-concrete bridge, 1,200 feet long, we realized that the country is making progress with communications. Until a few months before, the journey from north to south Albania involved a perilous voyage by punt across this treacherous river, which in winter is a broad expanse of rushing water. Beyond the Mati we passed via Lesh (Alessio) and Drin Valley and entered Scutari which, with nearly 30,000 inhabitants, is the largest centre in the country, though now losing much of its prosperity. Scutari was full of officials, soldiers, bunting, commemorative arches, and all that goes to welcome a president who, himself a tribesman and a fighter, is at home among these hardy northern mountaineers.

There is a hotel at Scutari, but we did not stay there, being the guests of General Sir Jocelyn Percy, formerly Chief of Staff to one of our armies in France and now engaged in reorganizing the Albanian Gendarmerie. The hotel, which occupies a good situation with airy streets on either side, and has a pleasant garden, is the Grand. It had been commandeered by the President and his suite during his temporary stay. There was always a curious crowd gathered at the railings to catch a glimpse of "H.E.," as he is familiarly called, or of the swaggering bodyguard dressed in their Ruritanian uniform as jazz as the dress kit of the soldiers in pantomime.

The farther north one goes in Albania, the less sophisticated appear the people and the more picturesque; until at Scutari—or Skodar as the Shkypetars call it—the streets are a dazzle of colour and light. Go to the old town on a market day, as we did, and take post at a cross-roads. There will pass representatives of northern clans, of the Han Hoti, who are Catholic, the Mati, who are Moslem, the Malissori—or mountain men from north of the Drin—who are a religious mixture, and finally of the Mirdite, a section of which has a reputation for holding up convoys in the mountain fastnesses on the track from Scutari to Prizrend. Tall spare men, these, moving with light step and a swagger. In a shady arch a group of Moslem women will be seen, but only outwardly, for black veils mask their faces, so that they resemble merely variegated bundles. When one of the fathers of the town comes into view, you see a figure with baggy coloured knickers, white stockings, tight sleeveless coats of dark stuff and a fez with an immense blue tassel, and—elastic-sided boots of Victorian pattern!

General Percy's enthusiasm for the Albanians as fighting men is unbounded, and he spoke in glowing terms of the material to work on, without, however, disguising the difficulties of equipment with which he was faced. There is compulsory service in Albania and the regular troops are provided with serviceable field uniforms. Besides these, are

the mountain clansmen whose propensity for using their firearms has been checked by the ingenious scheme so well-known in northern India. The chiefs have been given commissions and khaki uniforms, their adherents are admitted to carry their arms, but are allowed to fire them only under the orders of their commanders. The poachers are turned into gamekeepers, and excellent guardians of the mountainous frontier they make. Hardy, and brave to a fault, they are a fine irregular force. We had opportunities of studying these men, a number of whom were mobilized for our inspection at a neighbouring village. Seeing them at close quarters, and marking their proud yet pleasant manner, one could appreciate General Percy's belief in them.

After the war internal affairs became more settled in Albania, claims of sundry chieftains and others were partially adjusted, until one Achmet Bey Zogu, of the Mati tribe, a former prime minister and refugee in Serbian territory, appeared on the scene and took over the reins of power from Fan Noli, a priest and bishop of unorthodox consecration. He was duly elected president in January, 1925. Since then Achmet Zogu has consolidated his position, and convened a parliament enjoying power, in theory if not in fact, in which he reserves the right of veto without appeal, as well as of changing the constitution if he deems it advisable.

The main difficulties confronting the new ruler are those of rival claims and aspirations of Yugo-Slavia and Italy. Neither of these is financially well-off, but Italy has more cash than her neighbour. She has accorded financial assistance to Albania in return for economic and commercial concessions, which have at the same time incurred a certain amount of jealousy from Yugo-Slavia. The National Bank of Albania has been created on Italian money, the state monopolies are under Italian control, and Italian companies and syndicates are busily occupied in exploiting the forest and mineral wealth. The result of this financial dependence upon Italy, and the sacrifices necessitated by the lack of funds, without

which no state can move, has been to build up extensive Italian interests, and if the President and his Council play still further into the hands of Italy it might lead to their becoming unpopular, and to internal dissension fostered by outside intrigue. Italian interests would then be at stake, and the commitments undertaken in Albania requiring safeguarding, a partial military occupation of the country might be called for, with Italy once more established along the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Such a sequence would create dangers and complications involving all the Balkan States, to say nothing of Europe in general.

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Whilst in Scutari we were asked to go and see President Achmet Zogu, who is in his 'thirties, and as the name implies, a Moslem. We had already met other Presidents in various parts of the world but not Balkan ones. We knew quite a lot about this great Albanian from lurid accounts we had read in the papers, of the way in which he has fought to regain the throne, and the uncertainty of his seat there in this turbulent land. We drove in our car to the hotel which, as already stated, the President had commandeered whilst he was staying in Scutari, passed through the gates where sentries of the bodyguard were on duty in crimson tunics and trousers, Hessian boots, a bandolier and a rifle, and striking another note of originality with white fur caps.

The Foreign Minister then took us in hand and we were led straight to the reception room where the President, dressed in a tight-fitting Austrian uniform of a drab colour, was waiting to welcome us. There were no footmen about, no gorgeously dressed chamberlains to look us up and down and waft us along corridors and through innumerable state-rooms. The first thing that impressed us was the President's neat and dapper appearance and the air of ease and confidence that characterized him. Not that we expected to find him slovenly, but one does not usually associate an Albanian President with a figure that might have stepped out of a London bandbox.

We were introduced, and then the President began to talk in German which language he speaks with fluency ; he discussed affairs in Albania, the improvements he wants to carry out to attract the tourist, and the ups and downs in his country, all of which must be attended to before Albania can be converted into another of Europe's playgrounds as he plans to do.

The next day we had a further talk with the President who, attended by his ministers, came into the garden to be photographed. Achmet Zogu is full of energy and displays a spirit of goodwill. So long as he is president all should go well in Albania.

During our stay at Scutari the President pardoned one hundred prisoners captured the previous autumn when an incipient rebellion had been suppressed in the valleys of Parun Dager. These men who had sought to subvert his government were to be seen walking about the town, followed by their women folk who, doubtless, were glad at the restoration of their men before the hard winter set in.

Zogu reveals the strength of his character ; but, like other strong men, he can be sufficiently generous to tolerate a number of petty annoyances, yet when he does decide to take notice of an offender he acts promptly and with ruthless determination. The President has won his way by forcefulness. He came back into power over the mountains from Serbia, and the armed men of the valleys flocked to his standard. Like other great men, he listens to advice, but in the long run makes up his mind what he wants, and sees that it is carried out. In the course of conversation the President declared he was a strong believer in road development. He asked our opinion of the hotels, and when we told him that the country must equip itself with better ones, decided to inspect them and endeavour to provide amenities for tourists.

In the past the Albanians have resembled the petty states along the northern frontier of India, such as Hunza and Nagar,

who were often at war with each other, and, although of identical religion and stock, at variance in their aims and ideas until threatened by a common enemy, when they united to meet an invader. The crisis disposed of, the tribes and sects reverted to their old-time antagonism. So it was, and to a large extent still is, with the Albanians, who are divided amongst themselves but unite when confronted by a common danger. Like the other Balkan States, Albania rose to national consciousness after Greek, Bulgar, and Serb had each attained his independence. There was this difference, however, that Albania, from long association with the Turks, and the custom of serving in the Sultan's army, had acquired a distinct Turkish outlook, so that the people have never been decidedly anti-Turk.

After the Russo-Turkish war in 1878 the Albanians saw their opportunity and with a view to establishing national status, and becoming an independent entity in the family of nations, they framed the Defence League of Albanian Nationality. This covenant contained nothing antagonistic to Turkey since the Albanians realized that Turkish downfall would mean their own break-up and absorption in one or more of the adjacent States, most probably Italy and Austria-Hungary.

The period from 1878 until 1912 was one of comparative quiet, when the Balkan League, comprising Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria, attacked Turkey, the Montenegrins moving against the Turks in northern Albania and besieging Scutari. In the meantime the Serbs had defeated the Turks and occupied Monastir whilst the Greeks occupied Kortiça in southern Albania. By this combination of movements the Turks were evicted, and Serbia, Montenegro and Greece turned covetous eyes on Albania. Ismail Kemal Bey, an Albanian chieftain of repute and one with pro-Turkish sympathies, saw the danger, and by a personal visit to Vienna secured Austrian backing. He then convened a meeting of Albanian leaders at Valona the coast port that Italy desired. The move



Photo Authors
UP TO ANY MISCHIEF



Photo Authors
BEAU BRUMIELS OF THE HILLS



Photo Authors
THE YOUNG ALBANIAN FIGHTER

was favourable to the Albanians and their independence was there proclaimed in November 1912.

The declaration cleared the air to some extent and put a stop, temporarily at all events, to the threat of partition. The country in itself was not important, but as the Italian statesman Tittoni had previously expressed it, the real value of Albania lay in its ports and coastline, the possession of which for either Italy or Austria-Hungary would mean supremacy in the Adriatic.

The terms of peace between the Balkan Allies and the Turks were settled in London, the Powers insisting, *inter alia*, upon Albanian autonomy, the country to be neutralized and placed under an International Commission of Control. Then further dissensions and disagreement arose between the allies, the peace negotiations were abruptly terminated, and Serbia and Greece turned against Bulgaria.

Thus began the second Balkan War in 1913, in which the Bulgars were heavily defeated. The Powers then intervened and directed that hostilities should cease and, in accordance with their behest, Albanian territory was evacuated. It left, however, three factions with separate headquarters or governments, no organized authority, or demarcated border, and with a number of angry disputants who were being held off by the weight and menace of the Great Powers. To hasten matters, Albania was declared independent within limits to be projected by a frontier commission then being set up, and it was further decided to offer the Albanian throne to someone mutually agreed upon, and without an axe to grind. The choice fell upon Prince William of Wied, who formally assumed kingship in March 1914. The newly-made ruler found a troubled sea in which to navigate the ship of state, there were rocks and shoals innumerable to avoid, in the shape of international rivalries and intrigue; sometimes pro-Italian parties arose, then they veered in favour of Austria, whilst hostilities between Greece and Albania continued in the south. Finally the partisans of one side

became hostile to the so-called prince, and seeing the hopelessness of the position, or possibly through inability to cope with it, he left Durazzo in September 1914, after a brief but inglorious reign.

So ended the first attempt at imported monarchical rule in Albania, but the setting of the star of William of Wied went unnoticed in the glare of the world conflagration which another William had ignited. During that period Albania remained beyond the purview of the warring sides, but although holding aloof, her neutrality was violated. At the close of hostilities she was recognized as an independent state, enrolled as a member of the League of Nations, and a financial expert was appointed by the latter, to co-operate with the Albanian authorities in the task of economic reconstruction.

From our observations in Albania, and signs of the times throughout the country, there does not appear any immediate cause for apprehension. The future of the state must, however, be undecided, backed though it is by the League of Nations, if the weight and authority of that body can be said to count for much in world comity. The League has set the seal of its approval on the independence and general status of Albania, and, in accordance with the tenets of its faith and underlying principles that brought it into being, it should be able to maintain the new state as an entity, free from the bickerings and jealousies of its powerful neighbours. To effect economic reconstruction, with educational advancement and proficiency in the arts and crafts of modern civilization, so that it may acquire the requisite stability in the political and economic sphere, is certainly no easy task. The Italian statesman, Tittoni, characterized Albania as a geographical expression without much import; but it has now risen to a definite political consciousness and its future must to a large extent depend upon the endurance and sagacity of its people and rulers.

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Between Scutari and the frontier of Montenegro, which now forms part of Yugo-Slavia, is a good road passing through a valley of limestone rocks of savage grandeur. These rise in fantastic shapes from the floor of the desolate valley, and when the evening shadows fall the effect is one of mystery. Indeed you get the impression that there must be spooks and ghosts in this eerie spot.

Our friends from Scutari came to the frontier to bid us adieu, and then we wound our way up into the land of the Black Mountain, Montenegro—the eyrie of one of the smallest and most remarkable races in the world; one which had withstood the scimitar of the Turk and his efforts to convert it to the Moslem faith. Alone for centuries, Montenegro had fought for its life, and, in preserving it, had saved its soul.

CHAPTER IX

DALMATIA AND THE LAND OF THE SERBS

POSSIBLY the Serbian look-out man had taken the party of cars and officers, who had come to farewell us at Albania's rocky boundary, to be a vedette of an advancing army, and had sped back to the post to report that a new war had broken out. When we had climbed the spur we came upon soldiers fully armed and drawn across the road; all except one who was in the grip of malaria. The entire party appeared to be suffering from the miasmas of the marsh around them, but, so soon as we identified ourselves, they recovered some of their native spirits and gave us a cheerful welcome. Stacking their rifles, they accepted our proffered cigarettes and braced themselves to the business of passports and being photographed.

The triptyque and other formalities were to be discharged at Podgoritsa, twenty-two kilometres distant, for which we now headed by an excellent road. It is the largest town in Montenegro, and arriving there we pulled up at the douane to discover that Peter had left the *laissez-passer* on the table at the frontier post miles back. We must return for the document and that ruled out any idea of going on to Cetinje, forty-seven kilometres ahead. But what of an hotel? What sort of rough inn might we find here? We were meditating dejectedly when a voice at our elbow said, "Gentlemen, if you will try my hotel I will send and recover your lost document." This from a well-dressed man who had strolled up, and spoke in good English.

We tried his Imperial Hotel and found it, though primitive, a modern building, with a restaurant and a footpath overflowing with café tables, where the intelligentsia of the town assembled and talked politics far into the hot night ; so far, in fact, that the voices, floating up, destroyed our sleep and deserved the treatment one would accord cats under similar circumstances. We saw little of Podgoritsa, but were told it has a unique industry. It exports the dried wild *Pyrethrum* to England where it is used in the manufacture of insecticide. "But why export it?" we asked.

Beyond this city of the plain, Montenegro began to show us what it could do in the matter of mountains. The road is a good one but no sooner is it up than it slides down again, twisting in and out through bleak rocks and giant spurs; along tremendous gorges, with range on range diminishing into the purple distance. One would have to travel far to find a more perfect panorama than that at whose heart lies Cetinje; reached after one last long winding ascent.

At Cetinje we sat under the trees outside the royal palace sipping the red wine of Montenegro and listening to stories by a banker friend of the last ruler of this mountain state, bluff old King Nicholas, who dispensed justice at the gateway of his residence.

The first sight of Cetinje, once the smallest capital in Europe, is disappointing; the history of Montenegro, the Spartan ways and character of its people, the traditions of this warrior race who have grown up with the mountains, all lead one to picture an imposing castle or a fortress, perched on a rocky height, as the home of the chief of such a fighting clan. We had imagined it to command magnificent views up and down the valley, a stronghold of massive stone and timber several storeys high, approached from below by a succession of winding passages and alley-ways designed to baffle attack.

Instead, Cetinje is a small town rather straggling at one end of a flat valley, not at all in keeping with the dignity and

fame of what was the last of the mediæval and feudal states of Europe.

The houses are in the majority of cases two-storeyed, with red roofs, and of a distinctly suburban type with their plain windows and doorways. There are two main streets and a few leading off at right angles but the only buildings of outstanding interest are the palace and the monastery.

The former is now deserted, given over to the old resident caretaker; it is simple and unpretentious and it looks as though it might be a barracks or a factory. The palace is just off the main street in a sort of square with a tall spreading tree planted in the centre. There is a covered-in entrance with sentry boxes on either side but this was the only sign of pomp. This was the home of the last King of Montenegro—Nicholas, the lord and father of his people who reigned for nearly sixty years and was the beau-ideal of a highland chief, an autocrat, and leader of the "Pathans" of Europe. We spent a pleasant hour wandering through the rooms and inspecting the armoury.

King Nicholas believed in the divine right of kings; he also had faith in the efficacy of the marriage market and betrothed his many daughters to the crown princes and heirs-apparent of the states adjacent to him, as well as to those whose power and authority could safeguard him in the troubled waters of European diplomacy. He had marked down the Cesarevitch for his eldest daughter, but unfortunately she died whilst undergoing her education in Petrograd. However, he secured the future King of Italy, the Grand Duke Nicholas, who afterwards commanded the Tsar's armies in the Great War, the aspirant to the throne of Serbia, the Grand Duke Peter, and for the youngest daughter a prince of Battenberg was netted. For the heir to his own throne he secured the daughter of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg Strelitz and so assured a certain Teutonic sympathy in his efforts to bring about unison between his own and the Slav and Germanic houses.

When Elena blossomed out as the Crown Princess of Italy,

the Tsar Alexander III, with the generosity characterizing that gigantic monarch, who could bend a rouble piece and tear a pack of cards in half without an effort, gave her a wedding-present of a million roubles (£100,000) but the bridegroom with innate chivalry asked his bride not to accept the lavish gift for fear that the world might think he took the young lady for money and not for love, a delicate act that won him a definite place amongst men and women of all nations.

As Tennyson wrote in one of his poems "never has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers, smallest among peoples on the rough rock throne of freedom." Had he lived a few years later he might also have remarked that no king ever displayed so much energy nor achieved so wide a success in the matrimonial sense as did Nicholas.

He had a high opinion of his people, and a man was judged entirely by his record on the field of battle and not by what he possessed. He might be the son of a potter, living in a thatched hut through which the rain poured and the wind howled as it only can in Montenegro, but that did not affect the matter. If he had shown a valiant front to the foe, perhaps had come back with one or two heads to prove his worth, so he gained admittance to the ranks of men and warriors, and his status in the national estimation was assured for all time.

The Montenegrins were the Pathans of Europe, very pro-Russian, and when the Tsar was engaged in the struggle with Japan in 1904-05 the Montenegrin king offered to send a picked army of his warriors. But the Russian emperor declined the proposal and so Montenegro lost the opportunity of head-hunting on the plains of Manchuria.

The men provide a study in the psychology of character and temperament as found individually and collectively amongst the nations, and although comparisons are rarely pleasant we could not help contrasting the respective merits of the world's peoples as they affect ourselves, and how we should, as Anglo-Saxons, come to a decision, presuming we

had to make a choice in the selection of men for a desperate enterprise. The problem enunciated by a famous American ambassador recurred to us. Supposing that a Britisher had to set out on a dark night in a howling gale across a wide and dangerous stretch of water and having accomplished that, to land on a rocky shore lined with machine-guns, climb the heights and rescue a lovely lady and never tell anyone about it, and presuming that he was told he could take one man with him—an Italian, a Frenchman, a German, a Scandinavian, a Spaniard, or an American—whom would he take? We thought a Montenegrin ought to be added to the list.

Of late years King Nicholas kept more within his palace, for he was the goal of the tourist and the camera-man who waylaid him in the streets and mobbed him like a prima donna. We bought some old Montenegrin stamps at a tiny corner shop where, in the days when Cetinje had a king, books of a national character were sold under the auspices of the monarch himself.

Montenegro, he argued, was a state of warlike origin, of mediæval standing, proud of its history and traditions, and so he would allow nothing likely to undermine those sentiments and bring discord amongst his warriors. Hence the ban on literature of foreign origin. It was not a difficult task to enforce the embargo, for Montenegro was barely the equal of Lancashire in extent, and kept very much aloof from the world beyond her borders.

The bookseller was a mine of information, for he saw the determined old ruler constantly, and told us of the early days when these savage mountaineers stormed their enemy's sangars, fighting like wild cats in a welter of carnage, with a ferocity that usually won the day.

Near the palace is a hall containing the largest map we have ever seen, moulded from plaster in high relief and showing in exact contour all the mountain ranges that extend through Bosnia and Montenegro. The model is forty feet square and the mountains and valleys can be appreciated

far more clearly than by spending a year traversing the actual ground.

A little beyond the palace, on the other side of the roadway, is the monastery, a massive stone building sheltering under lofty rocks. Within is a plain chapel partly cut out of the rock and lit by narrow windows in the walls. Here lie the tombs of the royal house of Montenegro, an air of divine simplicity pervading this small haven of peace. Outside is the tower, in strong contrast to the interior for it has a stern and warlike feature of its own. The round tower that crowns the monastery tells of troubled periods when war and bloodshed filled men's minds, when the heads of Turks and other enemies slain in battle were stuck on pikes and arrayed along its battlements. Heads were the prize trophy of war, and when the number was so great that they could no longer be carried, the noses of the captured were cut off instead. This plain square, hard by the palace and the monastery, has often seen the counting of the bag when the fighters had returned from their raids and forays.

On leaving Cetinje for the Dalmatian coast and Ragusa via Cattaro we entered upon further wonders. The climb up from the valley of Cetinje to the summit leading to Cattaro is a magnificent vista of mountains; near the top is a small inn where we stayed for a chat with the proprietor and a drink of Montenegrin wine, of which these hardy people consume large quantities, without being any the worse for it. We were told that the king disliked strong drink as inimical to a warrior nation. In this belief he was at variance with Bismarck, who once said that he considered England's decline would set in now that she no longer had men who could dispose of three bottles per day.

The innkeeper was a typical Montenegrin of the old school; we had left the car a little way down the road, but he said, were we to leave it far off and entirely unguarded, everything would be all right, for there were no thieves in Montenegro. You might drop your purse with a hundred

golden pieces on the highway, the next passer-by would pick it up and place it on a rock or a stone by the roadside so that in returning to search for your missing gold you could the more easily find it. We took this for granted but decided not to put it to the test.

Whilst there he had occasion to call to a hut far down in the valley and we had an example of long-distance talking. Gifted with a language that lends itself to transmission, the Montenegrins will stand on the crest of a hill and send a message across a couple of miles or more of space; they will talk to a shepherd on the far side of the valley with a plainness and accuracy that are beyond the more civilized man, who detects only the faint and meaningless sound of the human voice. In the same way they will direct each other as to the whereabouts of straying cattle, although they might be a mile and a half above and beyond them. It reminded us of the natives in the Himalayas who have developed the art of long-distance conversation, and of the Red Indians in the far west of America who would pass information from hill-top to hill-top by means of smoke clouds carefully governed by two men with a cloth held between them, the signals thus sent indicating certain meanings.

We pledged the innkeeper in a cup of his own brew and passed on to the rocky heights leading down to the Bocche de Cattaro, the most amazing road in Europe as we shall presently see. On the way we stopped to talk haltingly to the real Montenegrin of the storybooks, a veteran of many a fight, who had the light of battle in his eyes and looked the part. We gave him a military salute which he returned with a grave dignity, and then the offer of a cigarette put the seal on our new friendship. Did we ever go in for fighting? Yes, sometimes. Had we ever taken our enemies by the hair, removed head from shoulders and gone merrily home with the trophies slung to our belt? We denied the soft impeachment, but asked him to tell us of the good old days when swords and heads came into frequent conflict. Yes, those were



Photo Authors

THE HERO OF MANY FIGHTS
IN MONTENEGRO



Photo Authors

BOSNIAN, AND PROUD OF IT



Photo : Authors

LOVCHEN—THE DESCENT FROM MONTENEGRO TO CATTARO

days for men and warriors, and his thoughts went back across the years and his voice was resonant and vibrating. He spoke of the vendettas and the eternal blood feuds; how a companion of his had been shot full in the chest in the street at Cetinje, had collapsed in a heap, but with amazing vitality had pulled himself together, drawn his revolver, and taken a steady shot at his retreating enemy—and got him fair in the head. Yes, those were days.

The distance from Cetinje to Cattaro is only twenty miles, but we took several hours over it. As already related, the scene is one of exceeding grandeur, for the eye looks over the roof of Montenegro with naught but rocks, gaunt, cold rocks, and ghostly ones perhaps, each with a memory of dead men who walk, when the moon is aloft. This is the most savage-looking country traversed on our tour, and on seeing it we realized why the people of this land hold life cheap. Nature has shown them how to be pitiless.

As the road winds down to Njegos the mighty Lovchen stands out against the western sky, a jagged silhouette, proving the aptness of the name "Black Mountain"—Montenegro. Before tackling the great descent to Cattaro we stopped to smoke a cigarette with a party of splendid peasants, striding along with their womenfolk a dozen paces behind them. The leader of the party was of patriarchal appearance, and, with his white beard and his six feet and more of stature, looked the typical warrior. He wore the baggy blue breeches, white stockings and shoes, white overall and red cummerbund, with the tasselled kapa of Montenegro as headgear—a type of fez, but black and red, with gold embroidery. We wondered how often in his youth he had lain out on the mountains until dawn, taken steady sight along his gun, and finished off an enemy before returning to his loopholed house for breakfast.

Leaving this band of natural athletes and soldiers, we found ourselves at the gateway to Dalmatia and the entrancing coastline, where skies are cloudless, the sea a dazzling azure blue,

and tiny islands are dotted about adjacent to the shore. From the heights above, it looked a sheer drop into the land-locked harbour of Cattaro and impossible for even a goat to find a way; indeed, in the days before the present road was built, none but the most expert cragsmen risked their lives on either the up or down journey. The approach to the precipice gives no indication that you are on the verge of the perpendicular. Passing along the narrow valley on the uplands suddenly a rocky wall appears in front, not unlike the wall surrounding a garden, and you make for the opening as to a doorway giving exit from the garden. Once through this narrow opening it turns sharply to the left, and you are on the edge of a roadway with a three-foot retaining wall, over which you gaze into the dizzy depths six thousand feet below. There is the road zigzagging beneath you until, in a succession of seemingly endless curves, it sweeps into a final straight white run at the foot of the mountains, to the water's edge in the dark cove of Cattaro.

The cliffside shows only bare rock and scrub, with gnarled trees clinging to an occasional ledge, but partially green and waving though they are, they do not make the roadway inviting. At the corner of each bend the road widens slightly, giving the appearance of tiny balconies on the face of the precipice, from which look-outs could watch the road below.

With infinite caution we crept down the wall in a seemingly endless series of zigzags, on most of which we were compelled to reverse, despite the calculations and advice of the expert, and even then we only cleared the wall by a matter of inches.

Until the collapse of Serbia in November, 1915, Montenegro held the impregnable heights on which we stood. She commanded every inch of this nerve-racking road, but, when the Austrian and German armies moved down through Serbia, she did what had never been done before—gave up the fight and made what terms she could. Lovchen, the 6,000 feet

THE DIZZY DESCENT TO CATTARO

barrier, was surrendered in January, 1916. The king and court fled through Scutari to Paris, never to return; and in process of time Montenegro became a province of the Yugo-Slav race, to which she now belongs.

We had begun the dizzy descent of Lovchen with the sun hanging low behind a lurid bank of clouds, and all the fjords of the Bocche de Cattaro a marvellous shimmer of gold, while in the middle distance was the rocky ridge—a veritable Gibraltar—below which the town hides.

We arrived in darkness, groping around the last of the crazy corners of the descent by the light of our lamps. Lovchen by night is not a pleasant experience.

On the Marina, guides rushed at us and spoiled their chance of engagement by excessive eagerness. However we fought off the gang and, eventually, discovered a ragged old man who spoke our tongue. "Yes, there is a garage—come, I will direct." But when we found that it lay 3 kilometres from the hotel we refused the hospitality of its roof and bargained instead with the guide to come into our service for the night and sit in the car, which remained safely under the stars till morning, parked on the Marina.

Cattaro lacks a suitable hotel. Not that this matters a great deal, since no one would wish to sojourn here, for the town only sees the sun for a few hours during midsummer, so shadowed is it by the colossal cliffs under which it nestles. Besides there are mosquitoes, with myriads of gnats and flies, and the place is dull. Treat Cattaro as a gateway, delight in the beauty of its surroundings, but do not tarry.

There are no streets in Cattaro, but outside its twenty-five feet walls is the Marina, where is an open-air café with trees—and a waiter who speaks English. He knew what we needed at ten p.m. and soon we had omelettes, and more omelettes, and coffee. Once upon a time this place was gay with bravely-dressed Austrian officers who clanked proudly among the Bocchesi, as the fisherfolk are called, while Montenegrins moved silently past and quite as haughtily, but

unarmed, having been relieved of their weapons at the entrance to the town ; in the interests of "safety first."

After an uncomfortable night at an inn of sorts we left Cattaro at daybreak the next morning and headed along the coast, where the road follows the sea, an exquisite prospect, for the water is blue and there was not a ripple to disturb its surface. On the far side of this inland sea rise rocky heights with forests of green trees, whilst dominant over the water are houses in dazzling white stone, their smooth walls often rising sheer from the water, and we found it necessary to thread our way either before or behind these miniature castles.

For over two hours we followed this devious highway, in and out of tiny hamlets, anon somewhat more ambitious settlements, and occasionally came to a jetty where steamers plying along this dreamland make fast and land their passengers and local supplies.

Across the lake towards its northern end, just where it opens by a cleft in the mountain on to the sea, are two islands each crowned with a tiny palace. Both islands and buildings are small, but the setting is a delight ; the water of the Bocche is as the blue of the turquoise, there is the soft foliage of the vineyard and the orange garden, and quaint balconies hang over the water ; altogether a scene rich in contrasts and colours. There are lakes elsewhere in the world with islands, but none so exquisite as these. Fortunately they have not yet been despoiled by the house agent and the surveyor, the hotel and the boarding house have not yet penetrated to these islands of dreamland, where one finds the landscape of romance, with a feeling that here must be the palace of the fairy tales to which the prince and princess came and lived happily ever after.

Sometimes the road climbs high up above the water and you look out across an inlet of the blue Adriatic, then descending to the sea level, follows its coastal windings. Thus we came about nine o'clock to Castelnovo, delightfully situated above the bay, where we halted for coffee at a café beneath the lime

trees. Whilst there a Russian who spoke six languages came to sell us picture post-cards and basketwork; he had the bearing peculiar to the well-born Russian, and Peter recognized him as head of a bank in Moscow in pre-war days, but the tide of Bolshevism had turned him adrift.

We were now in Herzegovina, to the east of which lay Bosnia, both countries having been annexed by Austria in 1907, prior to which they were subject to Turkish rule whose yoke was cast off forty-five years ago. They are wonderful little provinces, for here meet the currents of civilization, one from the west, the other from the east, and whoever wishes to study the evolution of a people can do so with effect amongst the Bosnians and Herzegovinians. The latter are by no means wild or uncivilized; the national costume betokens artistic taste, revealing a sense of the fitness of things.

The Bosniaks have a charm of their own, they seem pleased to see one and the cheery smile and courteous gesture are met with at every angle. They live in a land of milk and honey, their desire is peace and prosperity, the leisure to plough and sow their fields and reap the produce thereof, and some say it matters little whether the administrator of the country be Austrian, Turkish or Serbian, so long as the above conditions are possible.

* * * *

It would be unforgivable to hurry northward from Castelnuovo. There is the Adriatic on one side and the mountains on the other. What with a splendid road, superb scenery, a sunny day, and a car that purred as smoothly now as when it had left London, we were content to dawdle.

Around a bend we came upon Ragusa, which for beauty and charm entitle it to the claim of being "The Pearl of the Adriatic." We saw it lying below us, floating in a sea of blue, but set in white rocks; a place of delight, yet showing by its fortress, that peace has not always reigned here.

Entering by the old moat we sought tables, arm-chairs and rest under the trees of the Corso; leaving the car by the

roadside, we would absorb the atmosphere of Ragusa, and learn something of its past.

Romance was shattered by a stony-hearted Slav policeman who descended upon us and expatiated on the offence of leaving the car by the roadside. Idlers came and stood round and he appeared as if about to arrest us for breaking a sub-section of some statute. He produced a notebook. We produced our *laissez-passer*. This, signed by the Yugo-Slav Minister in London, requested the civil power to aid us, as and when necessary. When the officer saw it he subsided, coughed, and then beat the crowd back from the car, which remained very happily where it was.

* * * *

Before proceeding further we should say a little about the land of which Ragusa may be taken as a centre. This is the Karst country, a geographical feature which has exerted great influence on the political situation along the Dalmatian coast. It comprises large areas of limestone which, as in parts of Connemara in western Ireland, have the curious characteristic of absorbing moisture, so that it percolates underground, instead of accumulating to form rivers for watering the valleys. Thus the Karst is a land difficult to cultivate, indeed, there are no rivers entering the sea for a hundred miles of coastline. Behind Ragusa is the river Trebinjeica, a queer waterway that flows for sixty miles and then disappears below ground, to find an outlet after a subterranean route of a further twenty miles. We came upon another river of this character near Castelnuovo, issuing from the face of a lofty cliff several hundred feet in height. Locked within this limestone massif, are caverns innumerable and other weird phenomena of interest to the tourist and geologist.

The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the ponderous title of the country now known as Yugo-Slavia, has erased from the map the former Austro-Hungarian place names to make way for the Yugo-Slavian equivalents, and we found a bilingual key necessary to aid us in locating towns and ports that were

THE PIRATES' STRONGHOLD

famous under their old appellation, but meaningless from the existing procedure.

Of all the historic spots along the Dalmatian coast Ragusa conjures up the dramatic past; it is full of mediæval memories, and its Slav name of Dubrovnik cannot hide it from that under which it achieved its glories in the fourteenth century. Ragusa was at one time a maritime republic with a fleet of several hundred vessels that traded everywhere from the Thames to Alexandria, until it came under the kingdom of Venice in 1205.

Surrounding the town are the old ramparts just as they were six hundred years and more ago, the quaint market place and the red-tiled homes of the people who live in this atmosphere of calm seas and blue skies, the memory of which will be an abiding one with us.

You find in this place the full flavour of a mediæval town, with all its grace and noble feeling. The Ragusans have a history shewing that, although they lived well and enjoyed the things of this world, they refused to join in the slave hunts that flourished in their time, and made the trade a capital offence; in which they anticipated the English by some four hundred years. When Ragusa became a dependency of Venice, and Venetian Counts resided in the town as the chief authority, the world's best navy was Venetian; great galleys rowed by hundreds of slaves, and built of wood obtained from the forests of the Dalmatian coast; magnificent timber that formed the bulwark of the Venetian fleet, as the oak made the wooden walls of Old England.

Those were great times in the XV century when looting and piracy along this coast were the order of the day. Where we turned northwards, was the home of the pirates of Pagnia, who boasted that they had kept out the Christians for nearly 300 years longer than any others. These pirates swept the Adriatic, and in their long rowing boats had many a running fight with the Venetian galleys; indeed, they are said to be the people who first used the skull and cross-bones

as their emblem and trademark, which other exponents of the craft adopted in various parts of the world. When Henry V was fighting the French with his famous archers, the Pagnian pirates were engaged in a desperate struggle with the Uskogs, and where, later, we pulled up the car for an alfresco luncheon at Cannosa, took place the decisive encounter that handed over this coastline to the new-comers. These had a difficult task to perform, since it was necessary to placate the Austrians and keep good company with the Turks, so the diplomatic Uskogs shared the booty they secured along these coasts with the Austrians, and assisted the slothful Turk with their formidable war galleys, in return for which they were allowed to rob and loot up and down the seas for more than a hundred years.

In time their activities exceeded the bounds of even Turkish and Balkan limits, and so a determined attempt was made by a combined Austro-Italian force; the Uskogs were rounded up and deported into the mountains behind Ragusa, where they soon became as famous on land as at sea, their depredations continuing down to the XVIII century.

Ragusa held on her stormy course, and when Venice crumbled away, concluded an arrangement with Hungary by which her independence was guaranteed and, incidentally, trade increased through the Balkans to Constantinople. Salt was the chief commodity, for the beds on the sea coast yielded unlimited quantities, and the Balkans took much of it, having none of their own. We had seen this trade in the mountains of Tibet where the salt is carried down to India on the backs of goats, about twelve pounds weight being borne by each animal, which is provided with a tinkling bell, and guarded by huge Tibetan sheep-dogs.

The journey through the Balkans in those turbulent days was a more formidable one than that from Tibet, for brigands and warlike tribes infested the route. The salt was borne on ponies and mules, and the men took it in turns to ride ahead of the caravan beating a drum. So long as the drum continued



Photo · Authors

DAWN OVER MONTENEGRO



Photo · Authors

to sound the caravan knew that all was well, but when it ceased, that was the sign that brigands had waylaid the advance guard, and the party, being thus warned of the danger ahead, could make their preparations accordingly.

Battling along through the centuries, playing off first one foe against another, Ragusa came to the XIX century, when the all-conquering Napoleon appeared and cast covetous eyes upon it, for it presented just the advantages he sought for a military and naval base, from which to pursue his schemes of conquest in the Near East and along the Dalmatian coast. The Illyrian Provinces were created, a Senate was established and the representative of the French emperor formally assumed charge. So ended the career of Ragusa as a republic, an existence it had enjoyed for over twelve hundred years, but its name was perpetuated by Napoleon in that he conferred upon Marshal Marmont the title of Duc de Raguse and on the Arc de Triomphe which he set up in Paris, is seen the name "Raguse," prominent amongst the many victories of the modern Cæsar.

* * * *

We left Ragusa in brilliant sunshine along a road that rose and fell until Metkovich was reached. At noon we took lunch at Cannosa under what is probably the largest plane tree in Europe. Beside its giant trunk the car looked a pigmy and it was of such a size that a tunnel could have been cut through it large enough for the car to pass.

This coast road, built by Marshal Marmont for Napoleon, is as severe as any in Europe. Some of the surface is good, but much of it is loose, though smooth enough. We met hardly a vehicle and only one car in seventy miles. Rising steeply one moment, with gradients up to 1 in 5, we would plunge down the next; then from Cannosa the road climbed for a thousand feet and more until the shore and a score of islands were lilliputian below us. In places, it hangs on to the mountain side above the sea without guard walls to give security. Altogether this was most glorious motoring.

But we thought Metkovich would never come in sight. That was after the car had faltered and stopped on a steep hairpin bend and we had put our reserve petrol into the tank. Truly this road was eating petrol and we grew wistful about Metkovich and longed for it as if it were a place of delight, instead of being one of which the warning is given "unhealthy, avoid spending night here." Whenever the road ran downhill, we switched off the engine and coasted, and by similar devices coaxed the car into our goal with a spoonful of petrol left.

Metkovich is an important junction, for here is a choice of road; either to continue up the Dalmatian coast to Fiume, or, as we did, to turn eastward and follow the River Narenta to Mostar and Sarajevo, then branching either to Belgrade or Zagreb.

The Neretva Hotel at Mostar welcomed us at a late hour, and into the largest bedroom in the world. The capacity of this chamber was that of a suburban two-storeyed villa. It was thirty feet in all three dimensions. There were three balconies and eleven windows, the blinds of which flapped outrageously. No sooner had we secured one blind, than another began flapping. After a little we took it in turns, and then tossed up who should be blind-master. Another feature of this room was a giant stove, and furniture so plentiful that you could sit in a different chair every day for a fortnight. Besides this there was an immense chandelier suspended above us, which gave the impression that, any moment it might fall and crush us very thoroughly.

Mostar is the chief city of Herzegovina and although it became Austrian in 1908, and Serbian after the war, it still retains the atmosphere of the Orient with a *mélange* of Italian and Teuton architecture. The Austrian occupation scarcely disturbed the normal life of the people; it left the original inhabitants to go on in their time-honoured way, and in the streets the fez is met with as frequently as the soft hat and the bowler. You rub shoulders with Croats, Italians, Austrians,

THE LION OF MOSTAR

Turks, Jews, Germans, Serbians, and all the peoples of the Balkans ; infidels and heretics are mixed up with followers of the Prophet and none seems concerned with the existing order of things.

Apart from its Oriental character, the lion of Mostar is the old bridge over the Narenta ; it approaches the divine in the conception of build and span, as it might well do, and the city derives its name from the words "most" and "star"—bridges and old respectively—so possibly it is the point where history begins in this quaint town. Like many other famous structures its origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, and several ancient architects have the reflected glory of being its builder. The patriot of the land loves to think that it sprang from the genius of Hadrian or Trajan, but such a suggestion is anathema to the Moslem who will tell you that Sultan Suliman the Magnificent, a second Harun al Raschid, brought it into life and being. The latter may be right for it is now generally thought that although the design is Roman the material is Moslem, so we are left with the problem of adjusting the claims of East and West in its creation.

The traffic over the bridge is confined to foot passengers and we agreed that it would be almost profanity to disturb its ancient atmosphere with the modern motor car. At either end are two small Turkish forts used in the old days as guard houses for the bridge, whence the soldiers of the Sultan looked down upon the crowd ; there also are the chambers in which they ate and slept.

Like the Taj Mahal in India, the bridge at Mostar should be seen in the late afternoon when the sunlight falls upon it and brings into vivid outline the houses clustering by the riverside. Seen from the river bed it stands aloft against a background of dark brown stone and a blue sky, with the Turkish architecture, and the exquisitely proportioned mosque lying beyond it. Over the bridge is passing a colourful stream of people, who bring to mind the days of Sinbad the Sailor, Aladdin's Lamp,

and the wonders of the Arabian Nights, as told to us in the greatest storybook of all time.

* * * *

From Mostar our road lay north through Jablanica by way of the Narenta Gorge with its cliff and crag soaring to dizzy heights, where the scenery grows wilder, the river being forced between walls of vertical rock, and, repeatedly thrown back upon itself by opposing cliffs, it foams and roars in mighty impotence.

Surely few tracks have been constructed across so difficult a piece of country as the Narenta Gorge. In places it hangs on to the mountain side, whole cliffs having been blasted away to make room for it, with an unguarded precipice on one hand going down into a thousand feet or more of space. It is indeed no place for a nervous man. The curves and gradients along thirty miles of this tortuous ravine are cleverly designed, and in the old days, when brigands made the district their happy hunting ground, the foaming river below must have been convenient for the disposal of the wayfarers who fell into their hands. Truly the drive from Mostar to Sarajevo is worth the undertaking.

The excitement of the Narenta Gorge disposed of, there began one of the most fascinating phases of our tour, the passage of Bosnian villages on a Sunday. Some of the costumes and dancing was quite unique. It is remarkable that after accomplishing 4,000 miles, and at a stage of the journey when we had presumably finished with things Moslem, we were, in fact, in the stronghold of Mohammedanism in Europe. There are here one million of the Prophet's faith, more strict in its practise than is the Turk himself. Actually the proportion appears to be higher, since many Christians have adopted the baggy bloomer of the Turk. One sees more veiled women here than farther East, and their dread of the camera is great.

These peasants are splendidly built, and the women, when young, are handsome and possessed of a keen sense of humour.

One may reflect on the difficulty of ever establishing a United States of Europe—such as visionaries advocate—when village types and costumes within the same nation are so remote in their conventions.

Trouble threatened the end of a perfect afternoon, and all over a camera. We had taken pictures of costumes and dancing and matters were going in the best of good humour, when suddenly, as we were departing and actually in the car, an altercation started near by. The crowd parted and we saw men fighting to the death with murderous knives. One of us seized the camera and secured a snap of the affair, when angry voices were raised. "Put it away, quick"—and this we did, but the sudden change in the attitude of the crowd towards us was an interesting psychological study.

After this incident we drove on towards Sarajevo, overtaking carts filled with peasants well loaded with "Slivovitz." This potent spirit certainly makes men quarrelsome. These hefty lads and lassies decided we must not pass—but we decreed otherwise, and waited our chance. As this was a long time in coming, we had to put up with much banter, not all of it good-humoured. Knives were flashed at us, and we saw that once the manoeuvre of passing was commenced we would have to go on with it. At last the road widened a little. We drove at the gap. The steersman ahead attempted to close it—we hooted and pressed on. There were yells. We kept at our objective and frightened the horse that was in the way, into swerving from our path. If those lads could have got at us, there would have been a rough-and-tumble.

So we came to Bosna Serai, or Sarajevo, a town one approaches with morbid expectancy for here was thrown the bomb that started the Great War and was the final milestone to Armageddon. That is Sarajevo's modern claim to notoriety, although it has a history going back to feudal days when Moslems and Janissaries were all-powerful. Viewed from afar, the city has a Moslem aspect with its hundred mosques and minarets, but from certain angles the general effect is spoilt by

its Teuton appearance' and the modern and, in many cases, unsightly buildings side by side with the more graceful ones of the East.

With an ingenuity, quite laudable if applied to a worthier object, those in the Balkans who cater for motor tourists, place garages as far as possible from the hotels. One can almost imagine the consultation that leads to this arrangement. A plan of the town is spread on a table, round which gather hoteliers and garagists. Certain places are dedicated to the hotel business, and with a formal taking of oaths, the garagists swear never to erect accommodation for motors within this area. "By making the tourist drive across the town from the hotel to the garage, he sees more of our sights. It is to his advantage." Whether or not that be the formula it is the general practice.

So we were not surprised when arriving at the comfortable Hotel Europa at Sarajevo, to find that the garage was distant and a guide to it advisable. However with the help of Dr. M. J., the doyen of motoring in Bosnia, who had come to meet us, our troubles were speedily solved.

Sarajevo is the natural stronghold of Bosnia and so when the Austrians occupied the country during last century and later annexed it in 1908, they introduced the western touch, and although never popular with the Bosnians, it must be admitted that trade and commerce flourished under them, whilst the population also increased to the general benefit.

The Moslem quarter and bazaars are fascinating. Here are narrow streets without pavements where beasts of burden jostle passers-by, and laden donkeys saunter along upsetting the little open shops, where goods are displayed upon trays, or a movable floor raised a couple of feet above the ground.

The city has one of the finest mosques in the Islamic world, the Begova Džamija, built by a Turkish Beg towards the end of the XVI century. We entered it through a narrow doorway in the street and came into a courtyard with an imposing sycamore tree planted by the founder, beneath which the faithful

perform their ablutions before the hours of prayer. To the orthodox Moslem this is all-important, since the Prophet declared cleanliness to be a substantial element of the faith and the vital prelude to prayer.

Here is a curious mixture of business and prayer, for the courtyard contains a large stone the equivalent in length to the Turkish yard. When disputes arise over bargains in the bazaar, and the views of buyer and seller as to quantity, are at variance, they repair to the stone to have their opponent's fallacy exposed.

The mosque has the magnificence of holiness and is the place where one would expect to find a pious congregation ; yet once their prayers are recited and the injunctions of the Koran complied with, restraint is put aside and you see men engaged in loud business conversation, the pedlar cracking a joke with the sedate and bearded mullah, whilst children chase each other round the sycamore and none resents the unseemly chatter.

It is curious to think that within comparatively a few hours of London you can be in what will pass for the Orient as it was a thousand years ago. Here you can still see the bazaar thronged from early dawn with a motley collection of men, women, and children, making for the areas allotted to the sale of particular articles. It is a bright and animated crowd, from the rich and affluent merchant to the importunate beggar who clamours for alms "for the love of Allah" amidst the din of buying and selling. Pursuing our way, we may turn down a narrow side lane and enter a courtyard embowered in trees, where the rooms, in single storey, are arranged along the sides. This is a school, and, if you have never made its acquaintance before, 'twere well to do so now, since here is originality in scholastic procedure. To begin with, the pupils are seated on the ground; they have desks oft-times hewn from solid logs on which rest papers, pen and ink. The paper is rough and uneven, for it is prepared in much the same way as in the days of the Pharaohs and in the old time before them, but is both lasting and practical.

The pens are carved from wood and the pupil has a tiny flask of ink which he carries about with him. But the feature of this quaint schoolroom is the prevalent din, for the children sing whatever is set them for study. The Oriental treasures the theory that knowledge comes through the ears rather than by the eyes, so that progress towards classical honours is in direct proportion to the voice and lung capacity of the student. A grave-faced and bearded priest presides over the assembly, the knowledge that he imparts being mostly confined to reading, writing, and mechanical teaching of the Koran, of which the pupils are taught to recite passages by heart. At midday comes an interval for a meal of bread and fruit, after which study is continued in the same shrill tones until the school closes at sundown.

If you continue your research into the back-blocks of Sarajevo you will meet with fortune-tellers and professional letter-writers. The former is a popular individual wherever one may be, whilst throughout the East and its by-ways the letter-writer is quite an institution. Not all the people are literate, so they have recourse to his ability. The scribe sits cross-legged with pen and paper spread out upon his knees, clients gather round him and narrate the text of documents, petitions, and letters and he commits it all to writing. So on market days the professional amanuensis comes into his own when the terms of a bargain have to be recorded and deeds of sale drawn up.

Hard by the Turkish quarter is the Town Hall, whence the Archduke Ferdinand set out on his return from the official reception on June 28th, 1914. We were shown the corner of the street where the bomb was thrown that precipitated the conflagration; a right-angle turn, narrow, and lending itself to the accurate aim of the assassin. Curiously enough this was not the route the Archducal procession should have followed, and but for the error thus committed in failing to take the right road back to headquarters the murder might not have occurred. We met the actual driver of the ducal motor; in fact, he conducted us over the fatal spot and

THE BOMB THAT STARTLED THE WORLD

explained how the bomb had landed in the Archduke's car, with what result we know. It was a marvellous escape for the chauffeur, who was untouched, although the car was partially wrecked by the force and intensity of the explosion.

Efforts have been made to prove that the Serbians were actively concerned in the affair, but available evidence has failed to show that they were the instigators. Other theories for the outbreak of the World War were suggested in various countries we visited ; perhaps the most astonishing being at Bucharest, where a wiseacre alleged that "Pigs caused the war." By this oblique dictum he meant that Serbia had no port for exporting her famous pigs—and had to find one by instigating a war!

The human side of the tragedy at Sarajevo is worth narrating. The Austrian seizure of Bosnia, of which Sarajevo is the capital, aroused the hatred of the Bosnians who wished to be part of Serbia, and so began conspiracies for Serbo-Bosnian nationalism. Early in 1914 a fugitive from Austrian justice, one Princip, a Bosnian, came into Belgrade burning with hatred against the usurpers. He was penniless, hungry, and cold, and at night slept under the trees in the park. Employment and the means to live were alike denied him ; from such material do criminals and fanatics spring. Princip came into touch with a secret society operating in Belgrade, a form of Camarilla with bombs and revolvers as its sign manual, and desperadoes as its executive. It was violently anti-Austrian, which fitted in well with the fugitive's own ideas. So he was duly initiated before the inquisition in a dark cellar, and there met another, Gabrinovich, like himself a refugee and a sworn enemy of Austria.

The "Union or Death Society," as it was called, determined to get rid of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who was to visit Sarajevo to solidify pro-Austrian sentiments, the date chosen being June 28th, a day of national mourning for Serbia and Bosnia, since 525 years before, the Turks had overwhelmed

both lands and wiped them out as a national entity. So the archduke's choice was not a happy one.

The two mentioned were sworn in, to play the part of Brutus against the Austrian Cæsar, and with great difficulty they were got across the frontier. The night before the bomb was thrown, that set millions of armed men in motion, Princip appeared in Sarajevo, he and five other conspirators arranging to take post in different parts of the city so that one of them, at any rate, would have a chance at the archduke.

At half past nine the next morning the archducal train entered Sarajevo, the heir to the Hapsburg throne driving to the Town Hall, the route thither, contrary to usual Austrian custom, not being lined by either troops or police. In rounding a corner a bomb was thrown and landed in the back of the car, but the archduke with marvellous presence of mind picked up the fusing grenade and threw it out, where it exploded harmlessly and the car went on its way.

At the Town Hall the mayor and corporation with bouquets and smiles were waiting to receive the archduke, who was furious at the attempt on his life, as he might well be. However, the affair passed off and then came the return journey, the mistake in the route as already narrated, and the hurling of the second bomb.

* * * *

We followed our usual practice of making an early start and left Sarajevo soon after daybreak, well satisfied with all we had seen and heard, and with our bill of costs that came to only fifteen shillings a day each, though petrol cost nine dinars per litre or three shillings and sixpence per gallon. But there is one paramount evil which annoys motorists in Yugo-Slavia—the system of town and village tolls. We paid this charge at Mostar, Konjica and numerous other places, and although it averaged only about sixpence, the total mounted up, and taken with the cost of ferries became an appreciable and irritating item. We do not know if the tolls are devoted to repairing the roads, but believe not. The tourist would prefer



TROUSERED TERPSICHORE

Photo Authors



ON WITH THE DANCE

Photo . Authors

to pay a visitors' tax to the state rather than be held at ransom wherever he goes. Dr. M. J. agreed with this opinion but added, "The country is now settling down and we motorists are confident that legislation will be introduced to provide finance for the roads and to abolish this anachronism." He also pointed out that to give a new orientation to the main roads of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was a difficult problem. For instance, before the war Sarajevo and Belgrade were in different countries, and the call for an arterial road between them, now so urgent, did not exist. Apart from economic and military reasons, the present lie of the country and rivers renders road construction difficult.

Later, we discovered the truth of this, and our note—made en route—reads: "Serbs reforming the road from Zvornik to Belgrade and the unmetalled portions should in time be improved. The stretch Loznica to Valjevo (seventy-two kilometres) is all modern and widened." Beyond Valjevo, however, were seventy kilometres of unsurfaced abomination, with bottomless mudholes, through which the car would have swum had it been buoyant enough. It was one of the worst stretches of the tour—a condition due solely to local rain, which is at times so torrential that it washes roads away.

Beyond Sarajevo the road rises and falls through immense pine woods to the summit of the Javor Planina, at 3,780 feet, from which a winding descent leads to the river, and by an impressive gorge to Zvornik.

Amidst this gem of scenery we stayed for breakfast at a woodman's hut. The Bosniaks are genial folk, especially those bred to forestry. Our host on this occasion stood over six feet and weighed about sixteen stone. Dressed in white blouse, embroidered waistcoat, breeches, white stockings and sandals, he was a typical son of the hills. On seeing the breakfast we had ordered, two eggs apiece with black bread, he roared with laughter and insisted on another half-dozen being cooked for us.

Many miles beyond this we crossed a bridge built over a tributary of the Drina river, a crazy-looking structure and so we tossed up as to who should have the honour, perhaps we ought to have said the risk, for that is how it felt, of steering the car over this wattled creation. The choice of the coin fell on Arthur, and so the other walked backwards, in front of the car, to assist in keeping its wheels on a straight course over the osiers and the earth that sprinkled them. It struggled across, climbed the opposite side, and the worst was over. Then there came the Drina river, to reach which we slid down a narrow cutting in the bank to await the coming of a home-made barge from the otherside, a hundred and thirty yards distant. This brought over a horse and cart, but the cart was so heavily loaded that the horse could do nothing with the one-in-four slope of the cutting. It tugged at first with real Balkan energy, then like a sensible western horse looked round at the load as much as to say, "we shall get to the top if you bring some of those oxen." This, to the half dozen ox-wagons that had in the meantime arrived, the oxen gazing placidly at us prior to being transported to the far bank. So by the combined efforts of ourselves, a couple of oxen, and the horse, the cart came up the canyon.

Just after landing on the other side we discovered a small village, with a tiny café under the trees and some foaming ale of the country, which with cheese and Serbian brown bread, provided a dinner for the gods. While we were tackling the beer and the bread, a lad in shorts, hob-nailed boots, and a slouch hat came up and asked in English "Do you know who I am?" We thought hard but gave it up, so he enlightened us and told us he was a "boy skoo" and had tramped from Zagreb all over central Europe. Like all boy scouts he was alert and inquisitive and so at the end of our meal, as the weather was hot and our self-starter out of order, we commended his attention to the starting handle. This he swung until the perspiration rolled down his brown cheeks, but the spirit of Baden Powell survived the ordeal and the

six-cylinder Vauxhall answered the call of youth. He had done his good deed for that day.

After a splendid run to Valjevo the mud began, but as the rain held off, it was not impassable. Imagine a road one hundred feet wide, unmetalled, and traversing an alluvial plain of deep soil; the surface cut to ribbons and deeply rutted by bullock tracks. Imagine countless and bottomless mudholes, night falling, and a prospect of rain following suit. That is how we travelled for hours, until nearing Belgrade, when, around a corner among some hills, the road ended entirely, being blocked where a bridge was under reconstruction. Somewhere below us to our left was a deep gully, with a vague vertiginous track down it through the trees, but in the black darkness we were uncertain until we had inspected its length throughout by the light of matches. Incredible though it seemed to us as we consulted the map, this was indeed the only "by-pass," and the descent had to be risked. We got through eventually, and on to the highway that, sweeping above the Save and Danube, leads into Belgrade. We had covered 225 miles in fifteen hours, and were mighty glad to be safely in.

Thus we came to Belgrade, the capital of Yugo-Slavia, where the older streets are paved in a happy-go-lucky way and you bump in and out of holes with exasperating frequency. It was a depressing night when we arrived, a few dreary-looking cabs in the street and the city forlorn and melancholy. It had begun to rain—our third wet day since leaving London—and, as already remarked, when it rains on Belgrade it can be torrential. Paving stones are torn up and washed away and the local authority is put to it to effect repairs. Hence the holes and the bumping; but this may not be the case for long, if the new régime finds the money to extend the splendid highway improvement schemes already commenced.

We stayed at the best hotel in the city, almost opposite the British Legation where we were made so cordially welcome during our stay in the Yugo-Slavian capital.

There are some good modern buildings and houses, but the majority of the latter are one-storeyed with white or yellow colour wash and none seems built for a permanency. In the last war the Austrian batteries just across the Danube damaged practically every building in Belgrade, and the task of reconstruction has been heavy.

We had as cicerones in Belgrade some friends from the Touring and Automobile Clubs, who took us in hand and piloted us through the maze of streets, amongst the shops, and the various buildings for which the city is noted. It is perched on high ground at the junction of the Danube and the Save, and if the surface of the streets is trying to the temper they have a certain picturesqueness and are often lined with red and green pepper trees. We were shown the cathedral, unimposing from the outside, but with a wonderful interior, full of paintings, gilt, and colouring, and then we were conducted over the new country palace the king is making near Belgrade.

At the old palace we saw the windows from which the bodies of King Alexander and Queen Draga were thrown after the savage attack on them on the memorable night in 1903. The decision to rid the country of the two monarchs had been in the making for some time for, morally at any rate, neither seems to have been desirable as ruling authorities. But the method of riddance was repulsive in its brutality and the crudeness of its execution, and it must ever remain a blot upon those responsible.

The work of assassination was carried out by officers chosen from the garrison at Belgrade, headed by Colonel Naumovitch. Towards midnight the horde of murderers gathered outside the palace, and stole like thieves in the night up the stairways. No one appears to have interfered with them, perhaps from fear or because they had already been settled with. When the band reached the royal bedroom, the leader knocked on the door, but the king was evidently aware of what was transpiring, and declined to open up, on which Naumovitch produced a

dynamite cartridge and blew in the lock, being killed himself in the process. The band then rushed in, hacked the king and queen to death, and, opening the windows, pitched the bodies into the courtyard below.

* * * *

Whilst in Belgrade we went out to lay a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, being accompanied by the genial club-secretary and an officer of the Serbian General Staff, who wore his cap at a rakish angle and carried a big sabre. It is ten miles or more outside the city on the top of a lonely hill commanding the country for many a league around, and we went there in a car sent by the War Minister.

Serbian chauffeurs could never be accused of loitering; the instant we were in the car our driver "trod on the gas," hooted like one possessed, and went off like a rocket. Through the streets we tore, past tramcars which we missed by inches, in and out of struggling traffic, ox carts, timber wagons, perambulators, and peasants hurrying to the market with bundles upon their heads. The marvel is that we didn't hit anything, for the fact that there was other traffic on the road, that various people flew like scattered hens from this rushing tornado, and there was conceivable reason why we should go easily at the cross-roads, weighed with him not at all. Our chauffeur felt the weight of his position, he evidently appraised us far higher than we did ourselves, and so, having thought of all our past sins, we were resigned.

* * * *

Yugo-Slavia, although equal in area to Great Britain, has a population of only twelve millions. Our chief interest was the country's appeal to the motor-tourist, in which respect it has much to offer. "Tell us," we were asked by ministers and others, "what impressions have you formed?" We could say that we had travelled mostly on good roads, from Podgoritsa in the south of Montenegro; in fact from Florina in Macedonia and through Albania. We had found passable hotels in Yugo-Slavia, with really quite acceptable ones at

Castelnuovo, Ragusa, Mostar, Sarajevo, and Belgrade. Then none could travel this route, we said, without being in raptures with the scenery and graceful costumes. When the attractions of the Dalmatian coast and of Croatia, of Zagreb, and Bosnia in scenery, peoples, and sport, are known, many will come by road to enjoy them.

The inherent difficulties of establishing the kingdom and consolidating it economically, have caused roadways to assume a secondary importance, but when the value of tourist traffic is realized, the Serbian government should move energetically. Traversing the Balkans as we had done, we could not help thinking that while nations further west often refer to the backwardness and ignorance of the Balkan peoples, they are far from well-informed of the amount of quiet progress south-eastern Europe is making. In this, the motor will surely serve as the vehicle of a freer interchange of ideas, and lead to a higher appreciation by the West of the East, and vice-versa. If the eagerness with which we were received everywhere is a criterion of this, then the surmise will prove correct.

For the journey northwards to Hungary, a friend, Major G., had come down a hundred miles to Belgrade from his home at Topola Backa in Yugo-Slavia, to meet and guide us. Unfortunately we had to remain an extra day; therefore he could not wait. This meant concerting a plan and a rendez-vous, so he worked out the cross-country route to his home, trusted us to meet at a particular cross-roads next day—and left. Having steered a course through many lands we were optimistic of finding our way, and set out cheerfully to traverse northern Yugo-Slavia. After crossing the Save at Belgrade on a barge, the way winds in and out of dusty tracks before striking the main road, and this being a sheet of rough *pavé*, we found it easier to ride along the bullock track, proceeding with a care born of experience of unexpectedly encountered deep ruts and holes.

The road descends to Novi Sad, giving a fine view of the

Danube, which this summer will be crossed by a new bridge, and not by the slow ferry we had to use. An hour was occupied in loading up the barge with people of the great plains, their families, oxen, donkeys and poultry, amongst which we managed to park the car by the exercise of much ingenuity.

At last Novi Sad was reached, and we drove through the old fortress keep, to be welcomed by a fierce-looking but kindly general, who made us very welcome. Leaving the general, we set out to find Major G's. cross-roads, and, instead, lost ourselves. We found everybody else's cross-roads, except the major's, and began to doubt that it existed. The country was featureless, this being the great alluvial plain whereon are grown some of the finest crops of wheat and maize in the world. They are large crops and we passed most of them, seemingly, at least twice. There were no sign-posts, and directions on the route, given by our friends, were names applying when this had been part of Hungary, whereas we had only a map with the new Serbian names. For Pribicericero on the map, we must read Kisker, for Pasicero the alternatives are Oker or Alt Ker. It was decidedly confusing. But without the names on the route we were lost, for they were those understood by the peasants if we could pronounce them correctly. "What's in a name?" Not much, when you don't know the pronunciation. Why don't they give these places jolly little nick-names? One could enquire the whereabouts of say "Pribby" or "Kiss" with confidence, and at the same time establish a sort of "get-together spirit." But Pribicericero! It is not a name; it is a calamity! Every time we tried to pronounce the name of their home towns the natives thought we were putting a curse on the place. Besides it was not dignified. One can't ask the humblest peasant the way to Cirno Brdo (late Feketchczy), without making insulting noises, and thereby feeling like a naughty boy arguing with another equally naughty.

Perhaps, after all, the peasants merely thought we were mad, and when they tried to humour us, we concluded that

all foreigners are kind to madmen, especially madmen in motor cars.

In the dusk and cool of approaching night we sped on in search of the spot where Major G. was to meet us ; we covered kilometres by the score and still seemed as far off as ever from the trysting place. We were keen to get to Topola Backa for, with motoring as in war, food and the night's camp are dominant factors ; so it is that you look forward with keener anticipation to the pleasing gesture and the warm welcome when you most need it.

At last in the far distance up a long straight road, that seemed the only one in the world without a turning, but with more than its share of mud-baths, two lights were seen approaching. We accelerated on into the night and soon came up with them. It proved to be our host who had almost decided to give us up for lost. He now went ahead, plunging over ruts and through miniature lakes of mud from recent rain, then disappeared with a splash round a sharp corner into a narrow lane, along which we sped at breakneck rate, until at last in the darkness, and to the barking of a dozen dogs, we drew up at a roomy square-built mansion of one storey, with gardens and lawns, and little sequestered alleyways amongst the foliage and brushwood.

At a delightful dinner party that evening we listened to a discussion on the matters of moment, of awards to various neighbouring states at the expense of Hungary, of the many consequences of the peace treaty, the shadow of war, and Serbian efforts to colonize, with their own people, the land handed over to them at Versailles. We listened, but felt rather bewildered, tried to piece together what we had heard elsewhere, gave it up, and went to bed.

Next morning, as we sat breakfasting under the big lime tree in the garden, we had a real thrill. From far off came a dull threatening rumbling. It was a sinister sound, such as might be made by an earthquake in birth pangs, or a cyclone going into first gear, or a war breaking out.

THE WORLD'S NOISIEST CAR

The strange and fearsome noise came closer, and now the din was terrific ; it was like unto the angry bellowing of legendary giants. We paled, but resolved to face the horror, whatever it was—like Britons.

Nearer and nearer, louder and louder, until with a menacing roar, that also contained something of agony, the thing burst upon us—it was our hostess's brother arriving in the noisiest car in the world !

S. is not merely a racing motorist of fame in Central Europe, but a rare hand, as well, with horses. There are no finer horses in the world than those of Hungary, and the pair we sat behind one morning at Topola were true samples of the breed. For all his strength, with feet braced against the splash-board, and hands thrust through special loops in the reins, S. was hard put to it to keep them from bolting, both on the outward journey as well as when making for home again. We made a circuit of the estate that now forms part of Yugo-Slavia, and has been reduced by agrarian reform, from eighteen thousand to one thousand acres. Thus has the glory departed from a great property, but there remains the house and the household and the old-fashioned hospitality, for which the Magyar race has ever been famous. Of this we were given a practical instance. We had admired some liqueur glasses and, on leaving, found these had been parcelled up amongst our effects ; a parting gift and souvenir.

We went off in a cloud of dust and in "line ahead," Major G. leading us in his car, and the sportive S. bringing up the rear with *éclat*. When the villagers saw the company we kept, hats were raised and all honour paid to the respected landlord. Unlike many land-owners in Britain, our friends live on their estate and take an active interest in the life of the district, or rather had done so in the past. Now, under altered conditions, the countryside has filled up with a Serbian population, settled on the divided lands and, except in the villages, our friends were not always recognized.

CHAPTER X

ACROSS EUROPE TO THE CHANNEL

THE passage of the frontier by which we achieved our entry into Hungary is so typical of the sort of delay experienced sometimes in Central and Eastern Europe, that we describe it as an illustration, not only of the ritual, but also of the time absorbed in its consummation.

The uninstructed motorist sets off cheerfully enough to drive direct to the frontier post, where the soldiers explain in Serbian that he must go back four kilometres to the station-master at Horgos. This functionary in turn orders him to retreat another twenty-six kilometres to Subotica, alias Szabadka, alias Maria Theresiopel. This retrogression is stoutly opposed by the motorist who, not understanding the language, confused by the names of the town, and convinced that the idea is preposterous, argues hopelessly that there must be some misunderstanding and gets really fretful.

In the end he does what he has been told. He wastes an hour or more in going back, and locating the passport office. His passport *visa'd* he must come again to Horgos where the triptyque is stamped by the stationmaster, who details a soldier to take a joyride on the running board as far as the frontier. Here the guard lower their rifles and let him pass. Out of the frying-pan, now we enter the fire.

Across the frontier a Hungarian guard has to be satisfied, and six kilometres farther on down a small by-road there is a stationmaster at Roszkeszentmihalytelek to deal with the triptyque, and in twelve kilometres the police at Szeged inspect the

passports. Woe betide the tourist who misses the station master at Roszkeszentmihalytelek. He must return for as many kilometres as there are letters in the name, to make his acquaintance.

This is the kind of experience that saves motoring from monotony in modern Central and Eastern Europe. The states are so new that they have not had time to set, so to speak. Nobody seems actually to know which town belongs to whom. But every official is convinced that strangers are not permitted to enter by the front gate; they must go round to the tradesmen's entrance. As we sped from pillar to post we passed a tramp and wondered if he were an unfortunate traveller, who had been wandering for weeks or perhaps months up and down the frontier seeking vainly to cross. Perhaps he had argued, as we did, that he did not want to go to the town of the aliases but, more likely, the poor fellow was trying to find Roszkeszentmihalytelek.

The safest rule when proposing to cross by one of the lesser used routes from one country to another, is at the last substantial town on the route to the frontier, which may be thirty miles distant, to enquire at the préfecture regarding passport and triptyque formalities. This at least saves the exasperating task of retracing one's steps and perhaps being benighted far from one's destination.

We were fortunate, in having experts to guide us through, but even with their aid it took nearly three hours. Later we made strong representations on the subject to the competent authorities and trust that they recognize that formalities must be simplified in the interests of international touring; indeed they assured us this would be done.

The alignment of the Serbo-Hungarian frontier in this area is curious. We were told that at the Peace Conference the river at this point was selected as the border line between the rival states, because it is well-defined and navigable. Looking at the river we doubted the politicians' topographical knowledge in the case of the Hungarian frontier at Horgos. Here

it would be sufficiently difficult to navigate a child's sailing boat, so narrow is the stream over which our car reposed in supreme contempt of political geography, the front wheels in Hungary and the hinder ones in Serbia.

Reviewing the course of our route through Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Dalmatia, and Bosnia on to Belgrade, it had been a succession of mountaineering exploits, but from Belgrade to Budapest the course ran monotonously across level, fertile lands with scarce a vestige of hills. We were now on the great Hungarian plain, watered by the most typical of Hungary's rivers, the Tisza. This is the land to which the Magyars came a thousand years ago from their home in the Ural Mountains of Russia. A nation of horsemen, the fat pastoral lands appealed to them as reminiscent of their country of origin, and they settled here, building their city at Buda, on the Danube. Within a hundred years they accepted Christianity, under the persuasion—not always gentle—of their famous chief, Stephen, who later became king and was subsequently beatified by the Popes. Thus the Magyars kept their eyes to the West for cultural inspiration, and served as a bulwark for Christianity against the waves of almond-eyed hordes of the East and the Tartars, ever seeking to flood Europe. Buda was the rock against which these forces beat in vain, until a day came when the Turk overpowered all resistance and laid the nation low for more than two centuries.

As we sped northward beyond Szeged, accompanied still by Major G. and his charming wife in their British light car, we noted the fertility of the country and the fine evidences of Hungarian civilization on all sides. The villages are models of neatness, and the peasants have the appearance of being all that a peasantry should be—educated, industrious and contented. "It has been a big fight to restore the cultural and economic relapse which followed the social disorder caused by the War," we were told at Budapest and we were asked whether, in England, people realized that Budapest was in the grip of Communism for nearly five months during 1919.



Photo : Authors

A HUNGARIAN LINK WITH OXFORD



PRIDE OF HUNGARY



Photo : Authors

HOSPITALITY AT BUDAPEST

We confessed that little is known of Central and Eastern European countries, explaining this was due to our insular position, and our own immense post-war problems; adding that in Europe there were misconceptions about Britain. This certainly is so. Britons are still regarded as a race of superabundant wealth, an idea fostered by the fact that the only representatives of our race who make the Grand Tour are those with big wallets. Our own experience proved that one may travel widely by motor without great expense, and that little is needed beyond some six weeks of leisure, a reasonably sound car, and a sense of humour.

On our way to Budapest the two cars drew in to the restaurant at Kecskemet, a town that is the centre of a vast area devoted to vegetable and fruit culture, as witness the canning works which preserve these for export.

We were here in the midst of a pleasant country side, dotted with cottages built in the true Hungarian style; many of which were festooned with thousands of paprika pods drying in the sun. There is no more brilliant scarlet than that of the paprikas and they add colour to the peasant homes, nestling in groves of fruit trees, as warm as is their taste to the palate.

Dawdling by the way, night overtook us before we reached Budapest, but that does not mean we were late for dinner. One would have to be very late to miss this function which, as in Spain, begins towards nine o'clock and lasts for hours, through a range of appetizing dishes.

This was the case at the Hongaria, where friends and officials were awaiting the expedition which had now covered 4,923 miles since leaving London.

We had to apologise for being a day behind schedule and learnt, with dismay that, counting on our prompt arrival, the Automobile Club had arranged a banquet, and had not been able to cancel it on the short notice we had wired of our altered time-table.

It had been eaten without us! But the red fox which had

crossed our path one morning in Albania continued to bring us good fortune. Word came that a *second* dinner would be held in our honour. Could a more striking example of hospitality be found than this solicitude for the welcome British motorist ?

The dinner was notable as a famous motor gathering. Herr Robert Bosch, the "father" of magnetos, was there, and entered into an interesting though rather technical discussion with the authors on electrical problems connected with automobilism. He is a staunch believer in the lasting superiority of the magneto, and we did not have the heart to confess our awful sin—that our engine was fitted with coil ignition, and had not "missed" once since leaving London.

Having seen most of the world's great cities we could understand the praise lavished on Budapest, which is entitled to the front rank, from its situation on a sweep of the mighty Danube, with Buda looking down from the heights above. It is really two cities—Buda and Pest, situated on opposite sides of the river and connected by magnificent bridges. The city is at its best at night ; and the Franz Josef Quay, running parallel with the Danube and sheltered by an avenue of trees, is the vantage point. Imagine the scene from this embankment. The river set in surroundings of singular charm, and opposite, in Buda, the Royal Palace, Coronation Church, and various buildings of state, the trees and gardens surrounding them, and the terraces lit with a myriad lights. Below, the music in cafés by the riverside is wafted across the water, diffusing the spirit and charm of Hungary and its capital. Budapest, once seen, lives in the mind as a pleasant memory.

Set in the river, between Buda and Pest, is Margaret Island, a delightful spot with a restaurant amongst the trees and flowers, the rendezvous of society on fine summer evenings. In the old days, before the Mongols swept through the land, here was the nunnery of St. Elizabeth, of which you can still

A GYPSY ORCHESTRA

find traces. This fairy isle is the property of the municipality, and much money was spent in laying out the rose gardens and converting the place into a bower of natural beauty. We frequented it a good deal with our Hungarian motoring friends, to sit under the trees and listen to Tzigane melodies played by the gypsies, with all the grace and passion of which their orchestras are capable.

But why, Oh! why, are the staff and musicians all men wearing the sad looks and sombre dress suits of waiters in a Soho restaurant? Why not complete the harmonies and introduce the first row of the chorus from *Carmen* and the gypsies from *The Bohemian Girl*?

Imagine a Hungarian rhapsody in a Soho setting! Dark-eyed brunettes with flashing eyes and slim lithe forms, and dashing Romanys with gold ear-rings and wicked knives are needed. We make a present of the suggestion to the management.

The food is excellent and the meal can be purely a Hungarian one if you wish it. There is caviare, chicken with paprika sauce, typically Magyar, and fogas caught only in the Balaton Lake, and likewise served in Hungarian style. You may have sturgeon en gelée, peaches, iced melons, the famous Tokay wine, and brave company.

This open-air resort is as thronged as a restaurant in London after the theatres; the people pour in and by midnight all the tables are taken. Then the gypsy band, responding enthusiastically to the light-hearted crowd, warms to its work, playing airs reminiscent of Hungarian warlike history, sentimental melodies, with an occasional descent to fox-trots and one-steps to suit the twentieth century taste. Margaret Island pleased us mightily, and we brought away with us an appreciation not merely of its restaurant, but of its lawns, rink and baths.

* * * *

It is as difficult to get away from Budapest, as out of it. After the violent contrasts of the Balkans, the fascination of

the city makes the parting a wrench, and it took all our courage to make for the open road once again. Our friends declared that we must view their sea, by which they meant Lake Balaton, the largest inland water of Southern Europe, covering about 500 square miles, and sixty miles distant from the capital. We do not regret making, on the day we bade farewell to Budapest, the slight digression from our original itinerary to reach it.

The Hungarians have no outlet to the sea, so when they feel a longing for a sight of blue waters they go to the Balaton Lake. It is made a great deal of by the people, but, apart from its size, it lacks the beauty and charm of the English and Scottish lakes, being set in a comparatively flat country with hills on the southern shores. Balaton, however, is a pleasant summer resort and the bathing is good, whilst the fishing for fogas is excellent sport.

Some of the best wine in Hungary is made in the vicinity, and near the central part of the lake is a monastery where we were to have been entertained for the night, but the hour was late when we reached the lake, and, unable to find the road to the monastery which lies well off the beaten track, we decided to go on. About sixty miles farther west, we found a quaint Hungarian hostelry of the country village type, where the landlord came out to welcome us as was the custom in the good old days, and conducted us to spotlessly clean rooms on the upper floor of his inn. Before that, we had safely ensconced the car in a shelter, at the bottom of the yard, with a hanging door that let down, so that we were able to lock up, although, as the landlord expressed it, Hungary harboured no robbers.

In travel much depends upon what you get at the evening meal, after you have driven all day and are possibly a little ruffled at the narrow escapes from slumbering oxen and their drivers, from stolid peasants who unwittingly block the way with their flocks of geese and herds of squealing pigs, and other trials that irk the temper of the motorist.

AN OLD-WORLD AUSTRIAN TOWN

Life takes on a different aspect at the cheery dinner, to which contribute the good people of the country, and the conversation with one's fellows who, albeit of a different nationality and with a different outlook on life, are still hail fellows well met. The dining-room that night was inviting, with its old beams, the sanded floor, capacious fireplace, and the ornaments of the chase upon its walls, whilst the wine mellowed by years of careful cellaring, induced an air of peace and goodwill, and made us forget the little trials of the day and the *contretemps* of the wayside.

* * * *

Still moving westward we crossed the Austro-Hungarian border and were in Styria, a province full of charm, with fertile land and picturesque old towns and villages. There is a strong German element in the people, with a sprinkling of Slavs and Slovaks, Croats, and Italians, for the Yugo-Slavian frontier is only some thirty miles to the south of Graz the capital.

Graz is picturesqueness exemplified, and testifies to its history going back to Roman and Celtic days. Entering it, you pass under the castle and fortress on the rocky heights above the river Mur, whilst around are quaint old towers, church spires of the XIV century and earlier, encircled by gardens and age-old trees. Graz has an interesting story to tell, of the rise of Austria and the various races that have been dominant in the land.

Our guide, philosopher and friend, K. of Budapest, knew the fascinating points in this old-world town, and so we explored around the market place with its fountain representing the four great rivers of the province, and penetrated to where, in the purlieus, there is much of interest. There is a wine-cellar just off the market place to which we commend the discriminating motorist, although it does not necessarily follow that the corks of the best will be drawn for him. Much depends upon the time, the occasion, and, we might add, the guide.

On one side of the ancient courtyard of the Landhaus is an

old bell, which you pull gently and the caretaker will admit you to the finest collection of ancient weapons of war that the hand of man has yet accumulated. No other museum in the world can compare with it in that respect ; there are thousands of weapons, rare armour, and innumerable devices for encompassing destruction of the enemy in mediæval times. Many of the weapons and the armour display ingenuity of a high order, in beauty of engraving and the skill of the old-time armourer.

All sorts of quaint stories you will hear at the museum in Graz, or from the proprietor of the corner inn just beyond the market place. How Saladin in the Crusades, to demonstrate his skill with a sword, after Richard Cœur de Lion had severed in twain a bar of lead, threw up in the air a silken net and cut it in two with a single sweep as it descended. We came to the conclusion that Saladin was a man to be avoided in a dispute with swords, and even Richard's face changed, so we are assured, when he saw the latest thing in sword play.

It is scarcely necessary to read the history of Styria before arrival at Graz, for you have it in the museum devoted to the life of the province, with figures arrayed in the different costumes ; there are, too, rooms tastefully arranged, showing how the people in the past lived and had their being, and how they carried on the daily round, the common task. There are musical instruments, some of them wonderful creations of local talent, personal ornaments of the inhabitants of all the ages, and even the rooms in which they lived and ate and slept are reproduced for one's benefit. The whole forms a fascinating and life-like study of a people, which no amount of writing could ever convey. The Austrian, as the German, knows how to make his museums attractive, more, indeed, like a moving picture than the mere dull representation that is the usual characteristic of such places.

We left Graz with a resolve to return in the near future, for, apart from its other glories, there are pleasant walks across



Photo Austrian Federal Railways

AN AUSTRIAN CASTLE IN THE AIR—HOCHOSTERWITZ

the river Mur, winding up through the narrow streets to the forest beyond the Schloss berg, with entrancing views that conjure up pictures of the past

On leaving Graz the road led south-west to the Austro-Italian frontier through yet more delightful scenery. We had originally intended going via Marburg, on the river Drave, where in pre-war days, when this was Austrian territory, were a school and farm for the study of fruit culture which were said to be well worth visiting. It is now, however, Yugo-Slavian ground, and as the crossing of another frontier would be necessary to visit it, we made, instead, direct for Italy.

On through Klagenfurt, which would have held us, but for the time we had devoted to Graz, up and down mountains and past sunlit vineyards, anon a town of whitewashed cottages with one or two pretentious buildings, and we came to Villach.

We shall always remember that quiet old-world town, far down in the south of Austria that has let the centuries slip by and still clings to its mediæval fancies; one of the delightful places spoken of in the storybooks, but so sadly lacking in the reality of this work-a-day world. It was night when we arrived, and passed the bridge, looking ghostly in the moonlight, and throwing weird shadows on the placid waters of the sleepy old river. The houses with low-hung eaves and thatched, and the people of the place, were in keeping with the old time aspect. It seemed almost a sacrilege to intrude the modern motor car upon them, but we hardened our hearts, entered the tiny main street and enquired for the hotel. It was farther along on our right; we should find accommodation there, albeit the hour was somewhat late—it wanted yet an hour to nine-thirty, but this was Villach.

The innkeeper was as cordial as his house was ancient and it was cosy. Escoffier, as we found later, could not have given us a better dinner, whilst the wine must surely have been made for the reincarnation of an emperor.

"This is a very nice inn," said Peter, "but where is the garage?" A good motorist always first tends to his car.

"Ah yes, the car," invited the proprietor cheerfully, "just drive it through the front door into the backyard."

Peter looking at the vaulted doorway, then at the genial proprietor, smiled and murmured, "Ha, ha! a joke."

"No, no," protested the innkeeper making pantomime gestures, "Drive straight through the doorway, and we will move furniture in the dining-room and the smoking-lounge, so the car will be most comfortable." And Peter did!

After that we were prepared for anything, and were not disappointed. The company was good, and our late advent seemed to interest the guests, although we were not the only travellers present who had come from afar. There was another voyager who had been in the Vatican at Rome, knew the ways of courts and palaces, and, like ourselves, was journeying *en auto* through Europe. We wish we could remember all his anecdotes, poured out that evening after dinner, the shades of XVI century warriors looking down upon us from the walls of the heavily timbered old smoking hall. He spoke of an empress who once visited a monastery with half a dozen of her ladies-in-waiting, and so shocked the monks that the father abbot offered all the wealth the place contained if they would depart in peace, and save his face amongst the good people of the countryside. He declined to reveal the name of the queen who thus harassed the poor monks with her presence, and so we are still left wondering.

Then there was the aged Pope Leo XIII, who had blessed him in Rome, and was, we were told, noted for his wit and ready answer. Once he received the ex-Kaiser William in audience at the Vatican, a special interview for the emperor alone, but an aide-de-camp, son of the Iron Chancellor Bismarck, forced his way into the chamber, much to the annoyance of the Pope, who gave expression to it. Bismarck junior was nettled at the turn affairs had taken and asked His Holiness, if he was aware that he was the son of the great Bismarck—"That may explain, but it does not excuse your conduct," quoth the Pope.

Years before the Pope came to the Holy See, when still a

cardinal, a self-satisfied and gay young Count laid a bet that he would show him a cigarette case with a picture of a nude lady on the outside. When the Count met the Catholic dignitary, the case was produced and duly admired by the cardinal. Then turning to the owner he said quite calmly "Oui, c'est joli. Est ce que c'est le portrait de Madame la Comtesse ?"

We left this old-world haven early the following morning for the Austro-Italian frontier, some thirty miles to the south, where the formalities in connection with the passing from one to yet another country were concluded within a quarter of an hour. We stayed awhile to chat with the Austrian officer in charge, for this was historic ground in the war; the fighting took place in the mountains around us, and more than eighty thousand men of both sides had been blinded from the splinters of rock caused by incessant shelling. Every shell that burst had solid rock for its point of impact, and if a man were not killed outright he was yet exposed to the risk of being cut by bits of flying rock.

We said good-bye to the commandant of this frontier post and moved on a hundred yards up to the road to Italy. First visions of the land of Fascismo were impressive. We were heading south-west, and the sun was coming up behind us, just touching the heights to right and left, the lower slopes veiled in intense shadow.

The road follows the mountain side and is so steep that the Italian frontier guardhouse has been built into the mountain itself, the barracks for the soldiers being buttressed on the lopes above.

The outward and visible sign of the border is a long black and white bar hanging across the roadway, and only raised to admit the traveller when his papers have been found in order. The Italians were much interested in the car and seemed unable to comprehend that the absence of noise in the engine was in no way a sign of lack of speed. The continental motorist loves a noisy engine and considers noise and speed to be inseparable.

There is a light opera appearance about the Italian soldiery, the cloth slouch hat with a long feather stuck in one side, the tight puttees and pinched-in waist, do not give a fair impression of rough-and-tumble fighters, but rather of supers in a Drury Lane pantomime.

However, they were courtesy personified and with a friendly wave we were off to Tarvis, the first town in Italy, pulling up at a café by the roadside, with trees for its shade, gorgeous flowers in pots, and a coloured awning. A genial Italian came up and introduced himself as the proprietor; he had been several years at the Savoy, had looked after his tips, and put the proceeds of his labours in Inglaterra, into the wayside café at Tarvis. It was still only nine o'clock and so we tarried there amidst the peaks and forests, and Lucullus could not have served a better breakfast than did the ex-Savoyite and his wife.

From Tarvis the road drops gently to the south, almost too gradually to be noticed, until one is in the plains of Venezia and on more historic ground where, in the past, princes, popes and emperors have waged war, and invaders from the north came in; for these plains lent themselves to invasion and were the rich prize for which many a bellicose sovereign fought.

We were at Vicenza by early afternoon, a fine old town, with a mediæval market as its centre, for in bygone days there was much trade here with neighbouring communes. Now they have utilized the waterpower of the Alps, resulting in a great increase of engineering and textile factories and workshops. A larger population has also been attracted and industrialism has made great strides. One notices the racial difference between the Italians of these different provinces, and despite the drastic awards of the Peace Conference, and optimism anent the fusion of the southern Tyrol and the Trentino, the old antagonism remains; the policy of unification is opposed by the earlier Austrian occupation and civilization, as well as by the art and literature that have developed. Thus the task of bringing the new provinces of Italy into homogeneity will be

a lengthy one ; unification of administration may be possible, but that of the mixed races is a different matter.

The road through the plains is unconscionably dusty, but even and straight, and for many a league is lined with mulberry trees or poplars placed alongside the ricefields. It is a fine road from Vicenza on to Milan, and for long distances an even fifty miles an hour can be maintained without a tremor, so well laid is the highway.

The streets of the towns and villages are narrow in the extreme; often a tramway runs through them which it is impossible to pass, the alternative being to reverse or turn down a still narrower side street. Under the circumstances, the rule of the road is left to common sense. The houses open on to the street and children come tumbling out of them on to the roadway. One must go warily.

Everywhere we saw evidence of the energy and decision of the Duce, the head of the Italian Government, the Chief of Fascism, Minister of Foreign Affairs, of Home, of the Admiralty and of Aviation, Prime Minister and Dictator—Mussolini, the man and the Napoleon of the XX century.

Halfway between Brescia and Milan we stayed for lunch at a wayside restaurant, an Albergo Ristorante of the Italian highway, with excellent fare and good wine of the country ; where at a table under the olive trees and limes, the host comes forward in the pleasing Italian style to enquire your wishes. From the start you feel at home.

Our car was the first object of curiosity and when the host and his score of patrons, heard that we had come from afar and had already traversed a dozen countries, interest was at once keen and personal. The sympathetic note is struck when it is known you are a traveller and you tell your host that his own fair sunlit land is hard to beat. Mine host of the Albergo on that picturesque highway, bustled around ; he brought us an excellent omelette, spaghetti—on which the Duce contemplated a ban, and a risotto Milanaise that only a Brescian cook could produce. Then the wine—but one must

travel widely to gain acquaintance with the produce of the vineyard and the cellar.

We invited our genial host to partake of the joys of his own vintage and so under its soothing influence he waxed loquacious. He had been in the entourage of the Duce during the march on Rome, and so we gathered notes on the human side of the man of the moment. Once the Duce was established, the amount of work that he accomplished was incredible; he could work for eighteen hours without a break, enjoy two hours sleep, attend a council lasting seven or eight hours, wade through a mass of papers and give decisions on innumerable subjects in connection with the government, receive his tailor to be measured or fitted—for the Duce likes to be smartly turned out—and then proceed with other details requiring extreme concentration. He objected to the old Foreign Office, and chose the former German embassy, whither everything was to be conveyed. This horrified the limpets of the Foreign Office, but the Duce was implacable and fixed a time limit, the complete transformation taking place within the stipulated period.

The Duce does not believe in women taking part in the public life of the country, and for fear they might divert him from his task he keeps his family at a distance from the capital. His official working hours are from nine in the morning until ten at night, but he may resume again after midnight if there are still matters to be cleared up. This is often the case; recently he was asked by a compatriot if he could have an audience with him alone, and was told to appear at three o'clock in the morning, as then he would no doubt be found alone!

It was night when we reached Milan, the capital of Lombardy and largest of the Italian cities, not even excepting Rome. It figures prominently in the guide books, and with good reason, for it can tell us much of Italian history; in fact, so far as the north is concerned, its story begins with a band of Celtic peasants who evicted the Etruscans about the time the Chinese were building the Great Wall in the IV century B.C. The Celts

were not left long in undisturbed possession ; the Umbrians appeared, and the former had to fight for their holdings. They held them off, but were unable to resist the Romans who came two centuries later, brushed the Celts aside, and added Milan to the Roman Empire under Cæsar.

Milan prospered and eventually became an imperial headquarters, and when, after the decline and fall of the Roman Empire it passed under direct rule of the Lombards, the latter made it independent by virtue of its previous greatness and standing. This was the cause of its attraction to the outside world, and why various kings and princes fought for its possession. Amongst them was Charlemagne, who took it in the VIII century, together with the province of Lombardy. Sundry popes and nobles in turn seized it, during the innumerable wars that marked Lombardian history down to the XVIII century. Even a king of Spain was its occupant, and then the War of Succession decreed that it should pass to Austria, from whom Napoleon wrested it, proclaiming Milan to be part of the French Empire, as his predecessor Francis I. had done three hundred years before him.

Soon after this, Milan started a republic which was shortly discarded in favour of a monarchy, and in 1805 Napoleon was crowned there as King of Italy.

With his downfall at Waterloo it was again placed under Austria, until the latter quarrelled with Italy in 1848, when they were defeated by the Italians, and so Milan came into its own again, and following on the Franco-Italian War of 1859 was definitely incorporated in the Italian kingdom.

Among the sights of Milan which the guide-book classifies in order of merit, is the cathedral. It is a white marble building of immense size and was begun by Gian Visconti in 1386 and completed by the great Napoleon.

The greatest height of the building is 354 feet. So much has been written about this wonderful cathedral, its gigantic windows, its two thousand statues, and its accommodation in seating and standing room for over forty thousand people,

that it appears to be over-rated and some experts resent its being classed amongst the modern wonders of the world. Be that as it may, the cathedral leaves one with a sense of indefinable satisfaction.

* * * *

Everywhere we saw the effect of strong and ordered rule in Italy now that Mussolini has the helm ; the creator of Fascism never hesitates if he thinks a particular measure will benefit the country. We heard he had decided to substitute potatoes for the national dish of spaghetti in order to conserve the wheat supplies. But this last we declined to believe. If Mussolini seeks to suppress spaghetti even for a day there will be a revolution in which every chef will fight to the last fork.

Spaghetti in Italy is not so much a national dish as a sacred institution. Nobody can watch any Italian man, woman or child eating spaghetti without being impressed by the solemnity, the reverence, the almost sublime fervour of the performance.

Eating spaghetti is more than an art ; it is a ritual, and as much a revered part of the country's soul as the pictures of her artists and the music of her composers. Viva Spaghetti !

On leaving Milan we made for the autostrada, the new motor-way running north-west to Lake Maggiore. Being uncertain of the route to it, for it lies outside the city by devious ways, we took on board a genial Italian from whom we enquired the way. He was a character ; he told us how the Fascist chief intended to balance his budget with spaghetti, had decreed that no houses over a certain figure should be built for another year, and that workers throughout the country should have a further hour added to the daily task as part of the economy drive he was carrying out. But that was not all ; casinos can only be opened where none is already in existence, and no more bars or night-clubs must be added to the present quota. Paper has to be cut in a certain way so that it is not wasted, and with the petrol for your car must be mixed a specified quantity of alcohol prepared in the country.

Mussolini is the strong man amongst the purple company of

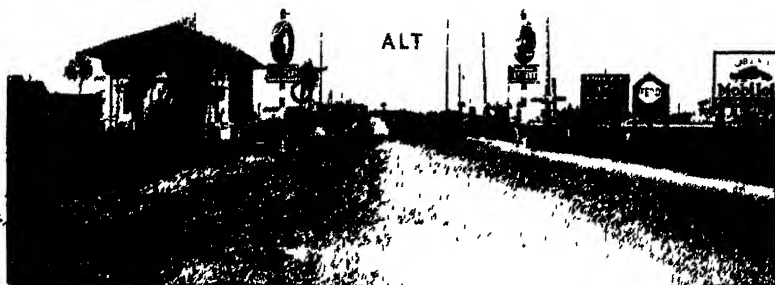


Photo : Autostade Coy , Milan

THE AUTOSTRADA



Photo Swiss Touring Office

in the hope of a lucky deal. We crossed the frontier near Brissago and, halting only at Locarno for lunch at a restaurant with a seductive verandah overlooking the lake, traversed Bellinzona and thence onward to the St. Gothard Pass.

It is a long climb to the summit but nowhere difficult or dangerous ; some of the bends are acute and it was necessary to reverse, otherwise the ascent is one of sublime grandeur and the descent equally so. This leads past the Devil's Bridge, the subject of many pictures and engravings. It is a stone structure across a yawning chasm, with the river thundering below and the rocks on either hand towering up into the skies ; altogether just the picture to excite the admiration of the artist and the lover of the awe-inspiring.

In the afternoon we came to Altdorf, the land of William Tell, where he is supposed to have shot the apple, but, as so often we have been told, did nothing of the sort. However, we like to imagine that he did, made up our minds that he had done so, and then set out to explore. Altdorf is as portrayed on the post cards, a picturesque little spot with curious chalets and large eaves and gables, tinkling cowbells, and goats that wander over the highway as they did in the old days, when there were but carts drawn by ponderous oxen, instead of the modern car that sweeps through the old town a hundred times a day, in strange contrast to those other times and other manners. Above the town are forests and rocks looking down upon the square, where stands the statue of the local hero. Tradition says the boy stood under a lime tree hard by, but that has long since been cut down, although the site is adorned with a fountain and the effigy of the man who made it some six hundred years ago. Evidently he considered his own claim to posterity and fame was greater than the tree that shaded the boy and the apple.

There may be apple orchards in Altdorf but we saw none ; and considering what a prominent part the apple has played in history, since the time when Eve took the bite that led to so much trouble and distress for those who came after her, down

to the upheaval during the campaign that Switzerland waged for freedom, the apple should, we thought, be more in evidence. Truly the apple of discord is no empty phrase, but the apple of greatness is equally notable, for it raised William Tell to fame.

Although critics cast doubt upon the story, and are ever ready to dispel the charm of it under the searchlight of investigation, they wisely refrain from doing so within sound or sight of the archer-patriot's town. A hundred and fifty years ago a Swiss author had the temerity to publish a work throwing doubt upon the fact and substance of the story, but he reckoned without the people, who came in a body, and seized the writings that threatened the national hero and the beliefs in which they had been cherished from time immemorial. The offensive manuscript was handed over to the local executioner who convened a meeting, when it was publicly consigned to the flames.

Whether Tell existed or not exerts no material influence upon the times, but he holds the strongest place in the affection of his countrymen at Altdorf, and generally throughout the land of peaks and lakes. Every year there is staged in the local theatre the tragedy made famous by Schiller, the cast comprising local talent from the peasants and shopkeepers, the shepherd and toiler in the fields, and others who consider they have the requisite talent for the drama. This talent is taken in hand by a theatrical expert from Lucerne, who schools them in their parts, but the audience is indulgent and looks kindly upon clumsy errors, and then there is an interval when you sit out under the trees, and sipping the fragrant beer, can momentarily forget the trials of both audience and cast.

The run from Altdorf along the Axenstrasse to Lucerne is a dream of beauty, but the road is narrow, the corners endless, and extreme caution is essential to avoid collision with oncoming cars. The road has been hacked out of the cliffside, a track representing much toil and patience in its achievement.

Lucerne is the Mecca of the tourist; the Swiss recognize it as such, they turn it over to the foreigner and during the

summer interval the shopkeepers and hôteliers endeavour to make the maximum amount of tourist hay whilst the sun is shining, in which, of course, they show commendable foresight and action, although their prices are at times beyond the pale, even to the long-suffering Briton. It is a gloriously sunny place, but overrun with trippers of all nationalities, of which our own provides a good percentage. Travel and tourist agencies vie with each other in producing for the benefit of the traveller, the cheapest facilities for reaching Lucerne, and so the element met with, sometimes savours of the charabanc variety in England.

There are sights of all kinds in lovely Lucerne, from the old town with its gabled houses, to the Lion of Lucerne carved to commemorate the bravery and devotion of the Swiss Legions who served in the various armies of Europe, of which there remains only the Swiss Guard of the Pope, reputed to be the oldest regiment in the world, having been founded in 1471.

At a local luncheon in our honour we were asked on our arrival by the host, who prided himself upon his English, if we felt "wholesome." We refrain from giving a report of his subsequent speech, which if it was not in the best of classical English, was certainly cordial in its aim and inspiration. Even had we been afforded the opportunity of expressing our wishes regarding the language in which the speech should be delivered, we would not have had it otherwise. Later, we met an old friend and erstwhile diplomat staying at our hotel in Lucerne, who, in common with those who have lived and moved in a wide circle, was full of good stories. He recalled an incident at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, convened to deal with matters connected with the Balkans, when Disraeli announced one day that he would address the assembled statesmen in French. Lord Russell, a consummate linguist, was aghast at the idea, for the famous minister's French was like the British Tommy's on the Western Front. What was to be done about it? Russell, a man of resource, and never at a loss for the

right word or correct move in an embarrassing situation, went to Disraeli and enquired in what language the president proposed to address the assembly. "In French, of course." "Then," quoth the tactful Russell, "it will be a lasting grief to everyone, for, knowing you as a master of English, they are naturally longing to listen to you." So the address was delivered in English.

Enough has been written about Switzerland in general to warrant us in passing over the journey from Lucerne to the French frontier near Mulhouse a bastion of the disputed provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, where a well-known writer tells us we reverse the experience of Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, and pass, first the Delectable Mountains, Immanuel's Land, and the country of Beulah, after which contact is made with Doubting Castle, Giant Despair, and the Slough of Despond. Perhaps that is an extreme view to take, for whether it be French or German domination, each has its relative advantages from which the occupation by either party must be studied.

Mulhouse is an industrial town, a second edition of Blackburn, with chimneys and clouds of smoke that mark a hive of industry, where some of the best textile manufactures in Europe are produced, and incidentally, a formidable competitor to ourselves in the continental market.

We are now in Alsace whose fertile plain lies between the Vosges Mountains and the Rhine, which with its sister State of Lorraine, is the bone of contention between France and Germany, and, who knows, may again become the prize for the definite possession of which these ambitious nations will compete.

Nature has been lavish with Alsace-Lorraine, and whilst the rich and productive soil is the principal asset, there is industrial activity in the larger towns, which made great progress under the German régime.

Of all the natural products of the soil, the hops for beer and the cabbage for sauerkraut, with the tobacco for pipe and cigar,

the vine is the main crop. We halted awhile at a quaint old inn on the lovely slopes of the Vosges, where the forests of fir and pine look down upon the village, and the streets are full of peasants, in picturesque costumes displaying every colour of the rainbow; especially women, who have a head-dress of starched and pleated linen worn slightly on the back of the head and in a crescent shape.

Garlands of grape vines adorned the inn windows and doorway, and, as we drove up, the proprietor rose from an ancient armchair that might have been made in the days of good Queen Bess. Here was a character for Dickens; like all French innkeepers he was loquacious, and as we ourselves are not wanting in that direction, conversation became comprehensive and cordial. There is a saying in Alsace, that if you have not taken a full flagon of wine you cannot be counted amongst the noble and the honest, so to justify our claim to merit we felt bound to put the seal to this proverb. Having done so we were able to testify to the choice old vintages that can be unearthed in an Alsatian inn if one humours the innkeeper, but it is not often that he opens his cellars to the best brand, even though the visitor be willing to pay a long price. He keeps it for those moments when the traveller touches a sympathetic chord in his responsive heart. So great was the fame of the wines of Alsace, that Louis XIV, the Grand Monarque of history, annexed it in 1680 so that he might gain control of its vineyards.

They have a curious way of marking the plots of land in Alsace where it is the custom to divide the landed property of a family equally amongst the children. It would be an expensive item to demarcate the border line between the plots of various sons and daughters, so stones are placed at the corners, or they may do it in a more picturesque manner by planting rows of flowers along the sides, and these, when they consist of upstanding and gaily coloured flowers, give the fields a delightful appearance. This rule also applies to the land of neighbours, and the local civic authority makes a periodical

HARMANTSWILLERKOPF—THEY DIED FOR FRANCE

Photo O N T



inspection to ensure that there is no encroachment on the territory of another.

We passed within sight of the famous Harmantswillerkopft, where the hardest of the mountain warfare took place. In the little villages beneath the shadow of the hilltop they tell many tales of derring-do in the war, especially of December 1914, when a French detachment under a lieutenant was surrounded by an overwhelming force of Germans. It was the depth of winter, the roads were clogged with snow, all approach to the hill had to be made on skis, and, in the case of guns, oxen had to be brought in to drag them to the summit. For several days the little band held out, at intervals the call of their bugles would be heard, the cheery note so well known to the Alpine Chasseurs who composed the detachment. Then one morning it ceased, the rescuing parties, struggling to gain touch with the heroes making their last stand, feared the worst, and so it came to pass that the Germans with superior numbers, had fought their way in and found the lieutenant with some thirty of his men dead in the snow. The rest of the party, a dozen in all, were taken prisoners, but with notable chivalry they were allowed to march into Germany to the prison camp, carrying their arms, a privilege well and truly earned.

The loss of the detachment spurred the French on to renewed efforts, and after more than seventy days of continuous fighting on the snowbound slopes they gained possession of the hilltop. It constitutes the finest observatory in the Vosges, for from it you look down upon the fair land of Alsace and all that it holds, its vineyards and fertile fields, and the forests of fir and pine clothing the sides of this beautiful range.

It was late afternoon as we passed through Belfort, making for Chaumont, with the westering sun throwing long shadows, and when we traversed the great plateau of Langres darkness had fallen, through which a beam of light appeared in the skies to the south, sweeping like a meteor across the heavens. Those beams represented one of the most powerful searchlights in the world that the French have recently established on

Mont Afrique, near Dijon, a post-war product in artificial light. The flashes spoke of ceaseless activity in aerial matters which the continental nations are displaying; it spoke of the age of super-things, and of fresh wonders continually crowding in upon us; of developments that prove we are still only on the edge of a new world.

This super-searchlight has eight optical lenses and prisms, and projects two rays, which successively sweep the skies, or if desired, its concentrated intensity can be switched on to any given object. It is of one thousand million candle-power, and in clear weather the beams penetrate to a distance of ninety miles, whilst the light is visible at a range of just over four hundred miles. Being on the main airway across France, a route of strategical and commercial importance, it is intended to light up that and adjacent highways.

As we watched its action there came the obvious reflection that it must react on airplanes in warfare, and drive them to still greater heights, for the beam of light stretched across the skies will make it difficult for enemy aircraft to pass over without being seen, and the only chance of partial immunity lies in ascending to an immense altitude. But what of aerial development? The super-searchlight must cope with this. It must possess great powers of penetration and produce beams far outdoing even the present creation. That the old spirit is still abroad, and the nations are not laying aside the sword for the ploughshare is proved by these and similar preparations for the sinister game of war. Already, as the result of the light we were watching from the heights of Langres, as we sped onwards to Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube, where Napoleon held off the allies in 1814, night fliers and bombing planes are being experimented with that are to a large extent noiseless, as well as rendered invisible by camouflage, a special tint being used by which the airplane can travel unseen through the skies, and baffle the searchlight striving by its wide angle beams to locate it, for the defence plane to take toll. Thus an airfleet will be ghostlike, and, in turn, to combat this new

AN AMAZING LIGHT

menace, experiments are being carried out with sound-ranging apparatus on the ground, so highly tuned that it can detect the approach of aircraft even when flying at a height of thirty thousand feet.

The light that greeted us from the summit of Mont Afrique is no longer the world's greatest. It has already been surpassed and in Paris itself, so that the French, despite their post-war troubles, are keeping in the van of research, doubtless mindful of the days to come, when as an essential against attack by aircraft, it is not the darkness and composure we knew in the old days when exposed to the menace of Zeppelins and other aerial raiders, but light and activity, that will be in demand.

The new light is one of fourteen hundred million candle-power and if it were placed at the top of the Eiffel Tower—980 feet high—it would be visible for hundreds of miles ; but that is not all, for were the light installed at an altitude double that of the Eiffel it would be possible to see it through field-glasses from Budapest, eight hundred miles distant as the crow flies.

Comparisons do not end there. The "candles" if put end to end would encompass the earth ten times over, and almost reach as far as the moon. Prehistoric man, William the Conqueror, and Good Queen Bess, each separated by intervals of hundreds of years, would have been staggered at such an apparition as these fourteen hundred million candles, which in their time the entire population of the earth could not have lighted. How far we have travelled since those days, and, indeed, within the past year or two, was brought home to us. The massed peoples on the globe would not have sufficed as lamplighters, yet to-day a single hand touches a switch, there is a violent commotion in the ether, and the power of fourteen hundred million candles is condensed into a burst of light. The heat radiated from the flame is said to equal to that at the surface of the sun, and a human being, if exposed to it, would frizzle away as rapidly as a handful of powder ignited by a match.

Absorbed in such thoughts, we came into Chaumont; night had long since fallen, but it was market day and buyers and sellers were still in the old inn off the main street, where it is said Napoleon stayed in 1814, when fighting the combined weight of Europe, a campaign famous for its masterly strokes that, although they rank high in military history and are amongst the most brilliant examples of strategical skill, availed him nothing; his star being already on the wane.

In the ancient inn where we dined that night, perhaps the emperor partook of roast chicken and salad, as we did, with such a soufflé as only a French cook can prepare. The *tout ensemble* was accompanied by a bottle of rare wine that the proprietor produced from his cellar when he learned we had travelled far and wide across the hills and plains, the mountains and the forests of Europe, into the fair land of Gaul. We hope Napoleon enjoyed his repast as much as we did ours, even though he were weighed down with the responsibilities that must have crowded that mighty brain, the anxieties that hover above and around when kingdoms and empires are the stakes. What terror his name had inspired and how the Austrian, Prussian and Russian commanders had vied with each other in making themselves scarce the moment they learned that the god of war was present on their front. Napoleon has gone, but the inn remains, and the vine is still fruitful. We were content.

* * * *

There is little more to tell. We sped on through France to Paris and Calais, in due course reaching London where the long journey of more than 6,000 miles through fifteen countries, came to an end.

We had traversed the new Europe, which has arisen since the war, had seen the Balkan States, that mystical Ruritania where authors and librettists have let their fancy run riot, and which is still regarded as the powder-magazine of Europe.

The time had passed pleasantly, but all too rapidly in those many and fascinating corners, where the rise and fall of nations

THE JOYS OF MOTOR TOURING

can be studied to effect, and a new era in an eventful and tumultuous history is opening, upon which the future peace of Europe so largely depends.

We had, incidentally, accomplished one of the longest motor tours yet undertaken in Europe, a kaleidoscope of peoples, lands, and colourings, which no mere rail journey could possibly afford. We came to the conclusion that if there is any desire to travel the Continent, and to know something of its peoples, and problems, its mountains, rivers, and forests, and its countless native and artificial beauties, there is nothing to surpass a motor or cycle tour, and, with due attention to the warnings given, we heartily recommend it.

CHAPTER XI

TOURING EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

Herein are set down the authors' reflections on their journey—the facilities for travel, as well as the difficulties are discussed—and advice tendered on the subject of preparing for a motor tour in Europe.

THERE was a time when a motoring journey across Europe and around the Balkans was fraught with difficulties and dangers. When the traveller, safely returned, could hold an audience breathless with tales of his adventures, across roadless spaces, bridgeless rivers and amongst turbulent peoples; of trouble with the car and tyres, and of his clever improvisations to defeat it; of lack of petrol supplies, absence of hotels, and of those other comforts rated as essential by civilized folk. He had won through against odds—was by way of being a hero, and was entitled to the notoriety which the motoring journals accorded him. Conditions, to-day, are not like this.

It is not generally realized that at the very time when motor touring was becoming a vogue in Western Europe, the Balkan States were preparing for war; that only recently have they become suitable for motoring. Thus Bulgaria did not throw off the Turkish yoke until 1908. In the two succeeding years there were disturbances in Albania, which has since passed through armed rebellions, in its transition from a backward Turkish province to the dignity of a self-governing state.

People did not desire to tour in what is now northern Greece before 1912, for there were no proper roads, and in that year the Balkan Wars began ; to be succeeded by the Great War. Strangers were well advised to keep clear of this region in those days. Everywhere the marching armies filled the roads, to the exclusion of the motoring visitor, and the hills were the haunt of irregular bands. Only now—and for the first time—is it possible to say that Balkan motor touring is practicable. The armies have dissolved, and the bridges they destroyed in retreat have been rebuilt. There was only one good thing they left in their wake—the cult of the automobile, with its ritual of roads and service.

That, perhaps, is one reason why we found that the onetime difficulties are not now very apparent, while as to dangers we only know that we never sensed any ; though that is far from declaring that they do not exist. Undoubtedly there are many bad men lurking in the fastnesses of the Balkans, but we estimate that just as the residents of each Balkan state travel by motor without interference, even so the tourist, providing he is reasonably discreet and does not explore where he is not wanted, may do the same. It would be a hypothetical sterility to speculate further on this point.

Europe, west to east, has been in the melting pot. It has been recast in a new mould, has cooled down, and has set in a form needing great heat to bring it again to a state of flux. Europe, east and central, seems to be as safe for motoring as the west, and is vastly interesting.

We travelled 6,300 miles ; traversed 15 countries ; satisfied 30 frontier guards that our papers were in order and arrived home without let or hindrance, without hap and with little hazard ; according to plan, and timetable, thoroughly satisfied that the tournée had been well worth the making. It had been a fascinating experience and one within the reach of many.

We found a welcome for the Union Jack in every country, smiles on each road, and hospitality in the towns.

By the critical, many of the roads traversed would be classed atrocious, some hotels wretched. But the critic would have to allow that some of the roads and hotels exceed anticipations, and that the scenery, the peasantries and other amenities were often superb. The motorist who seeks luxury-travel, or lacks self-reliance, is not urged to make the *whole* of this journey, though much of it lies within his capacity. Fortunately he is in a minority, and so the authors hope that what they have related may prompt others to follow, if not in their footsteps, at least in the same direction.

Our experiences may be summarized as follows:—

We had no difficulty in crossing frontiers, and the tourist equipped with passport, carnet or triptyque and international travelling pass—the use of which we will presently describe—may confidently plan a journey around Europe and the Balkans. We have already, in Chapter IX, given a warning that at some of the frontier posts, at which motor tourists are not frequently seen, there are delays; but actual hindrance is not to be feared. Though baggage examination is usually dispensed with, it is advisable not to carry many dutiable souvenirs, purchased *en route*.

The roads were mostly good, but there were long stretches in poor condition, and some that are indescribable. One becomes inclined to regard these latter philosophically, the attention being engrossed with the novelty of the daily experience. We realized that we were not travelling merely for the purpose of finding good roads, but rather to see the New Europe. The road surface in fact, is a subordinate consideration; and comparatively unimportant so long as the day's run is kept within reasonable limits. We found that—including all stops—an average of 100 miles each day was quite enough; though sometimes we covered over 200, and 387 on one occasion. The hardest day's run was of 200 miles, accomplished before noon.

Motoring is increasing rapidly and in nearly every country the governments are budgeting for large schemes of road

improvement. From what we saw, we believe that the bad and potholed highways are being dealt with progressively. It is at least significant that we observed many steam-rollers working between Breslau, Warsaw and Lemberg; a really first-class piece of road under construction between Greece and Kortcha in Albania, and again between Sarajevo and Belgrade. These are merely examples, but they serve to demonstrate that Eastern Europe is getting ready for motoring, and that conditions will improve each year. In Chapter IX we have mentioned our satisfaction with the road through Albania, Montenegro, along the Dalmatian Coast and on to Sarajevo. In the same way we were favourably impressed with Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, North Italy, Switzerland and France. On the whole, therefore, the roads exceeded expectations.

It might be imagined that one would often be at a loss to find one's way around Europe. Actually, this was not our experience. The A.A. itinerary gave plentiful directions and, used with the maps supplied, kept us on the correct road even when signposts were lacking or unintelligible. Passing through many lands in which, since the war, the names have been changed or are written in unfamiliar Cyrillic characters, signposts alone—where they exist—would be useless. Often they contradict the name-form used on the maps available. In other cases the maps are lettered in the Cyrillic characters; and again, in others they do not always discriminate one road from another very exactly. These little embarrassments, however, are only transitory. Maps, as the roads, are being improved rapidly.

Finding one's way out of a strange town is often a difficulty; and especially is this true in central and eastern Europe. We proved the advantage of using a guide to accompany one to the outskirts of cities, and an excellent alternative is to hire a taxi for pilotage; but one must impress upon the driver the necessity of not going too fast.

In the same way the hotels were better than anticipated.

Bedrooms with private bathrooms were obtainable at all the capitals and also—amongst other places—at Breslau, Lemberg and Salonika. This serves as a criterion, though the hotels at some of these centres were not luxurious, or so well maintained, as in western or central Europe. But one cannot reasonably expect such a high standard until the tourist traffic has developed.

Our timetable forced us, sometimes, to seek shelter at very modest hotels, and we entered these with an uneasy feeling that, if reports of the Balkans were true, we would be "eaten." And yet only once did one of our party find vermin. Probably there is some risk in this respect, and so the tourist would be well advised to plan his journey with such care that he could be reasonably sure of reaching reputable hotels on most nights, taking the precaution to wire ahead for accommodation to be reserved. This might involve long runs on some days, and starting, perhaps, soon after daybreak for the purpose.

The hotels, on the whole, were not expensive, as the following representative items indicate :—Good single room with private bath at Munster, 12/- ; Dresden, £1 ; Breslau, 10/- ; Prague, 13/- ; Lemberg, 6/- ; Bucharest, 17/- ; Sofia, 7/- ; Salonika, 17/- ; Belgrade, 9/- ; Budapest, £1. Rooms without baths were cheaper and at smaller hotels—at Lublin, Czernowitz, Sighisoara, Podgoritsa, Mostar, etc.—varied between 7/- and 2/-. We lunched well in Germany for 6/- each, dined well at Bucharest for the same amount and at Mostar for 2/6.

It was not easy, however, to keep a rein on expenses, when dealing in the variety of currencies which passed through our hands, and extras have a habit of piling up. The hôtelier in central and eastern Europe leaves his guests very much in the hands of the hall porter who, possessing a variety of languages and infinite assurance, is the rod on which one leans. Are there wires or letters to send, or is someone to be telephoned, or are passports to be sent to the police, or is change required ? He is the one that sees to it ; especially to the matter of buying one's money. His rate of exchange is not so favourable as

that at the bank, but then he has to live, and moreover he knows your desire to avoid that tedious operation and quotes accordingly. The little tasks he has done for you may be brought to your notice, when you leave, in the form of "chits" with commission added; commission being the euphemism to describe a tip, the amount of which is settled by the recipient. In the rush of departure, one is faced with paying these items, and, with a failing recollection to what they really relate, and an inability to read the language in which they are recorded, the inevitable result is a dispute, which is quite friendly so long as one settles in full. We found the best plan was to prevent the porter becoming one's accommodating creditor, and to pay cash for incidental service.

Generally, our impression of the hotels was that, while they often fall short of requirements both numerically and in quality, they are adequate to anyone contemplating a wide tour eastwards; and, we believe, they will respond with improvements as the motor traffic becomes significant.

Excepting two or three chance stops, late at night, at small towns, the car never suffered from lack of garages and mechanics, and indeed the facilities available at all the capitals were excellent. At other towns along the route we always found petrol and oil supplies, but not until it became known to us that one must not look for the blatant signs that advertise these commodities in our over-civilized land. The petrol and oil is there—in most towns—but one must discover it.

The resources and technical equipment, both of mechanics and machines, at some of the garages were truly surprising. At Bucharest, for example, the best garages could undertake any repair, however difficult, while at Sofia the keenness displayed by the staff at the garage we used, in cleaning, oiling, and carefully adjusting the car, was most admirable. As for honesty, our car was filled with a miscellany of packages and loose effects, which we left to the tender mercy of the garages; and yet the only loss was a silver flask which disappeared one evening; as it was bound to do. At most towns

we were able to obtain lock-ups—"boxes"—for the car, and with greater ease than one would in England. As regards the rumour that, when abroad, petrol is stolen from one's tank, we met with no practical confirmation of it; in fact, in all our dealings we encountered honesty.

The cost of our motoring was not great. We had a new car and new Dunlop low pressure tyres. The car behaved splendidly and broke nothing except a minor part of the self-starter, which was quite inadvertent. We did not change a sparking plug, or trouble very much except to oil, grease and watch carefully for anything that needed adjustment. The six tyres saw us through and have since covered a considerable mileage. In view of the above, our experience of the cost of motoring through eastern Europe is largely confined to the price of petrol. In Germany we paid $1/6$ a gallon; in Warsaw $1/9$; Romania about $1/3$; Salonika $1/9$; Albania about $2/9$; Montenegro about $2/6$; Yugo-Slavia between $3/2$ and $3/6$. The variation in the price of petrol, as this shows, is, therefore wide. The higher figure charged in some countries does not, however, add more than a few pounds to the total cost of the tour, and though it can safely be neglected as a material factor, one may say that expenses generally in connection with a car are a little higher than in Western Europe.

As to the quality of petrol, we did not detect any appreciable variation from that sold in Britain. It was generally "straight" spirit and, therefore, inclined to cause pinking. Except for parts of the Balkans, where it is sold in the tins of about four gallons capacity so well known overseas, we bought petrol sometimes from the pump and at others in cans of convenient size. Our reserve tin travelled all round Europe without being touched; until reaching Dalmatia where the tank ran dry, when we were glad we had resisted the inclination to lighten the car by discarding our spare container.

The total cost of our tour may not be a criterion for others.

So much depends on the nature of the expenses incurred, the type of car, the personal factor, and the number of passengers. We could probably repeat the same circuit at half the cost incurred, by practising drastic self-denial in many directions. As it is, we estimate that, including the running of the car, the daily charge per head was about two pounds. Expenses are higher in the capital cities and, between these, the cost of living is on a much lower scale. We do not doubt that, with care and an economical car, an extensive tour encircling the Balkans could be compassed without exceeding twenty-five shillings per head per day.

As to the amount of time which should be allotted to a tour right across Europe, here, again, the personal equation is all important. A friend of the authors' accomplished the journey there and back within a month but that is about a fortnight too short for enjoyment. To guide the reader, we give, in an appendix to this chapter, some attractive circuits, the significance of which will be better understood if they are studied with the map. So long as he observes the rule of the road, the motorist will not meet with difficulty as regards local regulations. There are speed limits of between ten and thirty kilometres in some towns and villages, but these are not any more strictly enforced than the equivalent in England. Travelling with a sense of the fitness of not outraging the susceptibilities of foreigners, no exception is likely to be taken to one's driving.

On the other hand the tourist cannot motor through Europe without being irritated by the number of tolls exacted by towns in certain countries. Especially is this true of Yugo-Slavia and Budapest. The sums claimed are small, but they mount up and the time their collection takes is a loss to the motorist. In addition to these there are motoring taxes to be paid by visitors entering Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia and France, but not in the Balkan countries, or elsewhere along the route.

The most useful language for this tour is probably German, with French a good second. Italian is helpful in Albania. This need not deter the motorist who knows only English, for he will rub along somehow although there are occasions when he will feel the lack of alternatives.

A cognate difficulty to language is money. It is one thing to budget for a tour traversing the Continent, but quite another to keep the pocket sufficiently full of the currency required at a particular moment. We left England with English, Dutch and German money, a letter of credit and travellers' cheques. In Holland we nearly ran short of Dutch currency on a Sunday, but fortunately were able to change English notes. Leaving Holland we had about one pound's worth of Dutch money to spare, and as Customs authorities are not allowed to act as money changers, the surplus had to enter Germany. In a similar way a pocketful of marks accompanied us into Czechoslovakia, and the same accretion of useless currency followed our departure from each country. Occasionally, and when we were quoted a favourable rate for certain of the money, which was not often, we unloaded it, but in the end arrived back in England with a rare numismatic collection. In Poland we learnt the value of American dollar bills, and advise tourists to Eastern Europe to carry a reserve supply of these, since they are well known, even in small villages, as we have mentioned in Chapter IV, and are easily changed.

In the same way travellers' cheques may be negotiated at the large hotels and by substantial firms, whereas a letter of credit necessitates a protracted visit to the bank, which may not be open at the precise time that suits the holder's convenience.

In general we recommend the tourist to start out with a fair quantity of English bank and Treasury notes, and of the currencies of, say, the first two or three countries he will pass through, together with a few American dollars as well. Let him also carry travellers' cheques and—in reserve—a letter

of credit; arranging with his bank to telegraph a further credit if desired.

The keeping of an accurate account of expenditure, of money-changing deals with hall porters and at garages, and of balancing each day, are things which the tourist will probably give up after his third or fourth country. As the *Scorcher* used to say "For those who like that sort of thing, that sort of thing is all very well." Supposing one buys dollars with pounds at an unfavourable rate, and Polish zloty with the dollars—again at a loss—and then changes the zloty in Rumania into lei, each time there will be marginal losses and, inasmuch as the daily expenses are detailed in the currency of the moment, they do not, on addition and translation to sterling at the flat market rate, bear any resemblance to the sterling expended! And even if the mathematical genius on tour has lived up to his reputation by tracking down fugitive guilder, marks, kroner, zloty, lei, leva, and drachmae, he will lose it before leaving Albania where—as we have described—all sorts of monies circulate and their value is arbitrary. This is approximately how it works out in Albania :—

£1=125 Albanian leks=25 gold francs=65 corona
(not the cigar).

Also 1 gold napoleon ("Nap")=16 shillings=100 lek=52 corona.

And a "corona" is only a euphemism to describe one of the pre-war silver coins and it may be either lei, leva, drachma, kroner, mark, lira, franc, or even a six-penny piece—and it is worth about 4d.

PREPARING FOR A BALKAN MOTOR TOUR

Having surveyed our day-to-day experiences for the benefit of the reader, let us now discuss what preparations he would make if contemplating a tour of the Balkans. The requirements will vary with the individual and we shall, therefore, endeavour to cover the ground broadly, leaving the adaptation, selection, or rejection of certain of the ideas to his judgment.

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

Let us divide the subject under the following heads :—

(a) Formalities.

(b) The car and personal needs.

(a) *Formalities.* The motorist may obtain through the Automobile Association the following :—

Customs Carnet and Triptyques,
International Travelling Pass,
Passport.

Since every country levies a customs duty on motor vehicles he would have to deposit the amount in cash on crossing each frontier but for the carnet or triptyque. The carnet is an international document, valid in a number of countries, under which the Association guarantees the foreign customs so that the car is afforded free passage of the frontiers of a number of countries. A triptyque is available only for one country.

To qualify for a carnet and such triptyques as are required, the motorist must deposit a portion of the customs duty in cash with the A.A. and supply security for the balance. When the tour has been completed the motorist returns his discharged papers, the cash is refunded and the security released.

The international travelling pass is another important document and obviates the necessity of taking out driving licenses and of registering the car abroad.

The A.A. is authorized by the Government to issue the international travelling pass to British registered cars, but before so doing must examine the driver and vehicle, certifying, as regards the former, that he is reasonably competent and, with respect to the car or motorcycle that the brakes, exhaust, etc., are efficient.

As regards the passport, one suffices for husband and wife travelling together, but the other members of the party, over sixteen years, will need separate passports. *Visas* are no longer required by British subjects for France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden,

Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Austria. but passports must be endorsed by the Passport Office for *all* countries to be visited.

Possessed of carnet, triptyques, international travelling pass and passport the motorist is a Freeman of Europe. But he has to cross the sea to get there. The shipment of cars, however, has been reduced to a simple formula, and the cost of transportation at owner's risk, varies according to car and route, and ranges between £2 and £10.

Insurance is a matter not to be overlooked. Before proceeding abroad, the motorist should satisfy himself that his policy is valid for the countries he will visit and he should cover the risk of marine transit and loss of baggage as well.

Another point to remember before a *protracted* tour is undertaken, is that *leaving* Britain the vehicle license may be surrendered, with the Registration Book, and a proportionate refund will be allowed, but for a short tour no appreciable saving is effected.

A question which the motorist should settle early in the preliminary stage of his preparations, is where he desires to go and by what route across Europe. By obtaining itineraries and maps in good time, the motorist will profit by studying them and, what is well worth while, by consulting books which discuss the territories he will visit. Thus equipped, mentally as well as materially, he will obtain far more enjoyment from his tour than if he travelled in the blinkers of ignorance. Every inch of Europe has a history and is something more than scenery.

So much for the formalities and preliminaries—for which ten to fourteen days should be allowed. The next problem is that of :—

(b) *The Car and Personal needs.* A query that is put to us constantly is whether a tour of the Balkans is within the capacity of a small-powered car. The answer we give is that the conditions both of surface and gradient are very exacting, so that a small-powered car, if loaded with passengers and overloaded with luggage, would be seriously stressed, and, by

the time it had covered between four and six thousand miles, might show signs of wear and tear. There are cars of twelve to fifteen h.p. in regular use in the Balkans, giving a good account of themselves, but the most popular types are more powerful than this. For ourselves we would not hesitate to take a really first-class "small" car, but would deem it necessary to carry only the lightest of luggage.

Balkan conditions often are "Colonial" conditions. A car, then, is all the more serviceable if of not less than eighteen h.p., with a track of four feet six inches to four feet eight inches, and a ground clearance of about seven to ten inches. These are not essential, but if our car had had less than the above, we should often have been inconvenienced and delayed. For many miles one may be traversing grass-grown or deeply-rutted bullock-tracks, and under these circumstances a narrow gauge and insufficient clearance impose strains on the car and on the steering, making driving difficult.

It is a *sine qua non* that the car should be in sound condition, with brakes above suspicion, ample radiator capacity and reliable steering gear. We advise Dunlop low pressure tyres, and large *double*-acting shock absorbers, while, if the springs are light, an extra leaf all round might be fitted, and spare top and second leaves carried as spares. Rubber bumpers strapped between spring and chassis are an extra safeguard. The car should be fitted with two spare wheels and new tyres for preference, since it must not be forgotten that, if it became necessary to purchase a tyre when abroad this would incur a duty payment on re-entering Britain. It is as well to mention that many garage men in the East are unfamiliar with the excellent Dunlop well-base rim, and that, when arranging for a tyre to be repaired, one should stand by to show how to remove it. Otherwise, as we proved, the operator may labour in vain.

The question of spare parts is not easily answered. In our own case a coil of copper wire and surgical tape were all we actually needed, although we carried spring leaves, engine

THE CAR AND ITS LUGGAGE

valves, plugs, assorted nuts and bolts, crankshaft bearings and connecting rod bearings, brake linings, fan belt and other components, and would do the same again. The reader would perhaps be well advised to consult the agent or manufacturer of his car on this matter. Even then, if a part breaks, it may be one of which no spare is carried! We advise the tourist, therefore, to arrange a credit with his manufacturer, so that, on receipt of a telegram, the desired component can be despatched without delay and by air if necessary. Amongst the accessories should be tyre chains, straps, rope and, of course, jack, tubes, pump pressure gauge, repair outfit and the usual tools. These should not be stowed below the luggage, but carried on the running board in a large (padded) box. The tubes should be wrapped *tightly* and carried in bags so that friction may not—as in our case—chafe holes in them, which one does not suspect until the tyre has been remounted and refuses to inflate.

To comply with the regulations in certain countries, a bulb horn as well as an electric is essential, the tail lamp should be moved to the left side and a dimming switch fitted to control the headlamps. Then, as a convenience, we advise a mirror and spot-light, with “wander” lead, attached to the near side of the wind-screen.

Luggage. What to take, and where to carry it. This is a very important matter and one that requires quite as much thought and causes almost as much debate as the preparation of the car itself. Our remarks will not apply so much to the party with the high-powered saloon, which has almost unlimited carrying powers, with its fitted trunk case at the back, as to the medium-sized touring car carrying three or four passengers. The fitted trunk case is very neat, dust-proof and accessible, but it may cramp one's style from the outset, since, if it is reasonably small as it should be, it puts a definite limit on cubic capacity, usually resulting in an overflow of miscellaneous articles to be accommodated inside the car, none of which, however, would be material if the

car were a big saloon. Rather must we consider the case of the party travelling in a medium-powered touring car and bent on a month or six weeks travel through Europe. The average type of luggage grid which is fixed on to two iron brackets or extensions, which in turn are bolted, or riveted to the rear chassis members, should be treated with respect. These brackets, owing to overloading and excessive vibration, are liable to break off short. Two iron supports, each acting as a strut coming up underneath the carrier, and bracing each side member at a point about nine inches from its junction with the chassis, can often be fitted and will repay the trouble. It may, of course, be difficult to find a firm anchorage for the lower ends of these supports in the case of cars fitted with quarter elliptic or cantilever suspension. Some such precaution, however, should be taken if possible, for it is not uncommon to hear of luggage being shed, and actually lost, abroad. To hold the luggage securely in place, only the strongest of straps should be used and, as a dust and wet excluder, a waterproof sheet in which to wrap the cases. Then, but only if room within the car is cramped, a trellis "carry-all" grid may be fitted along one of the running boards. These are useful, but have three disadvantages, the doors on one side of the car are out of use for the rest of the tour, the luggage within them may scratch the paintwork of the body, and it is exposed to the weather.

Luggage itself must now be considered, and assuming that we are *not* dealing with the fitted trunk case, then allow one medium-sized light fibre suit-case to each passenger, and one small hat box for the ladies. Save weight by leaving the good old "solid" leather suit-case behind in England. Then the driver, or the "chargé d'affaires" should have a small attaché case, or tennis bag, for maps, guides etc., and last, but not least, a haversack. This last article is very important for reasons that will be stated later.

There is another item of baggage, and that is the luncheon basket. If our extended experience is any criterion this

might be omitted from an already overloaded car. A large unbreakable vacuum flask could be taken instead, housed in a fibre attaché case which would also hold a few biscuits and simple provender, to serve, should occasion arise, for a wayside meal. We did not, in practice, indulge in wayside meals, preferring to rub shoulders with the peasantry at the inns. And, on the subject of the midday break, allow two hours and enjoy a necessary siesta.

Some may be prompted to take a wireless set, but for touring through Europe it will be found that many countries prohibit the importation of such apparatus while, again, on the score of weight, a set is an encumbrance. Moreover, it must be carried wrapped, metaphorically, in cotton wool, if the connections are to be protected from the vibration which will inevitably derange the circuits.

There are many small items which will ultimately find their way into the car before departing from England. Spare electric bulbs, umbrella, a "dip-stick" marked for litres, instruction books, lists of the makers' agents and of spare parts, and camera films. Finally, there is the first-aid outfit, containing iodine, lint and cotton-wool for cuts and tooth-ache; boracic acid for inflamed eyes and general antiseptic purposes; aspirin, peroxide of hydrogen, anti-mosquito mixtures, quinine and chlorodyne, the latter being an anodyne for many ills and chills; plaster and insect powder.

* * * *

We shall not attempt to prescribe the distribution of the luggage, beyond insisting that as little as possible should be carried on the rear grid, because in this position, it not merely imposes the maximum strain on the car, but also is exposed to the dust. A tour across Europe involves a daily fight against the intrusion of dust, and every precaution should be taken to exclude it from the luggage and the person.

We now come to the actual clothing to be taken, a difficult proposition, and one on which it is impossible to

lay down any hard and fast rule, except this—that it *must* be cut down ruthlessly to the irreducible minimum.

For a man, one would suggest:—A rain-coat with a detachable fleece lining, which will serve as a dressing gown, a light cotton dust-coat and a soft felt hat. The work-a-day suit might be grey flannels, pull-over and golf jacket. A silk jacket could be added for use on tropical days, and one thin lounge suit for evenings and days off. The dinner suit can be dispensed with—and may have to be if the party is a large one and room a serious difficulty. Take day shirts, some starched and soft collars, coloured silk handkerchiefs, socks, ties, gloves, changes of underclothing (summer weight) pyjamas, silk for preference, a pair of shoes, studs, links, articles of toilet and *soap*; which latter is not supplied by hotels.

On ladies' essentials, in the way of clothing, we are less qualified to speak, but fortunately in our days these take up little room and weigh less. A serviceable travelling costume is, of course, necessary, and a dust-coat and a rain-coat with detachable fleece lining. Fur coats are bulky and liable to be stolen. One afternoon dress and a semi-evening gown should suffice, while hats should be limited to two. Of other items, the ladies are left to judge for themselves.

The haversack aforementioned is for the purpose of receiving soiled linen as and when cast off. Such a depository will be found a veritable boon, since articles awaiting the attention of the laundress take up much more room than when ironed and folded. Most hotels will undertake to have soiled clothing washed and returned at a delay of, perhaps, only a day.

Before starting on a tour the motorist should make careful arrangements for receiving letters. "Poste Restante at——" appears easy, but it is by no means a simple matter to collect letters in a strange town where unknown languages are spoken. Much time may be wasted in the process, and the quest may be fruitless, since such letters do not always reach their

IN CONCLUSION

destination. All our experience teaches us that, if possible, letters should be concentrated on a minimum of good addresses, such as c/o the Bank, or a friend.

A final word about photography. Nothing is more disappointing than to return and, when the films are developed, to find bad results, with the permanent record of the European tour lost. Our experience has all gone to prove the wisdom of taking two cameras—a folding and a reflex, the former for convenience, and the latter for occasions when moving scenes and groups are the subject. There is this further advantage in using more than one camera, that any failure with the one may be made up for by success with the other.

Almost all the illustrations in this book are the product of two $\frac{1}{4}$ plate Kodaks of these types, and any merit they possess, as photographs, is due to the fact that we were able to count on the mechanical accuracy of the shutters and, what is most important under tropical conditions, on the light-tightness of the apparatus.

We think we have covered the whole of the ground, and, if in the effort we have been too diffuse, we must leave it to the reader to extract the wheat from the chaff, concluding with a final word that specific advice, such as the above, is not of so much use, as is common sense. And common sense will dictate the reasonable, and simple, steps to take to prepare for a journey through Europe. If the description of our experiences impels the wheels of others eastward, or aid the armchair motorist to travel thither in imagination, we shall have had our sufficient reward.

APPENDIX

SOME ALTERNATIVE TOURS THROUGH EUROPE.

ROUTE No. 1.

HOLLAND, GERMANY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA, HUNGARY
AND POLAND.

MILES		MILES	
	Flushing	41	Czechoslovakian Frontier
68	Breda	39	Banska Stiavnica
35	Eindhoven	103	Polish Frontier
39	German Frontier	72	Cracow
49	Cologne	192	Warsaw
	Ostend	186	Posen
78	Brussels	67	German Frontier
83	German Frontier	107	Berlin
	Cologne	90	Magdeburg
51		88	Hanover
		81	Osnabruck
54	Coblence	50	Dutch Frontier
79	Frankfurt	58½	Arnhem
67	Wurzburg		Arnhem
86	Bayreuth	66	Breda
40	Czechoslovakian Frontier	68	Flushing
37	Carlsbad		
78	Prague	82	Hague
130	Brno	12	Hook of Holland
34	Austrian Frontier		
43	Vienna		
38	Hungarian Frontier	2,270½	Total.
125	Budapest		

ROUTES THROUGH EUROPE

ROUTE No. 2.

BELGIUM, GERMANY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA, HUNGARY,
YUGO-SLAVIA, ITALY, SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE.

MILES		MILES	
	Flushing	125	Budapest
49	Belgian Frontier	126	Yugo-Slavian Frontier
12	Antwerp		
30	Brussels	46	Vukovar
	Ostend	103	Belgrade
	78 Brussels	195	Sarajevo
		111	Metkovich
83	German Frontier	130	Sebenico
51	Cologne	214	Fiume (Italian Frontier)
54	Coblence	47	Trieste
79	Frankfurt	113	Venice
67	Wurzburg	182	Milan
86	Bayreuth	89	Swiss Frontier
40	Czechoslovakian Frontier	157	Geneva
		5	French Frontier
37	Carlsbad	119	Dijon
78	Prague	192	Paris
130	Brno	154	Boulogne
34	Austrian Frontier		
43	Vienna	3,019	Total.
38	Hungarian Frontier		

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

ROUTE No. 3.

BELGIUM, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, ITALY, AUSTRIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, GERMANY AND HOLLAND.

MILES		MILES	
	Ostend	34	Brno
78	Brussels	130	Prague
		68	German Frontier
	Flushing	39	Dresden
91	Brussels	119	Berlin
		90	Magdeburg
44	French Frontier	88	Hanover
153	Paris	81	Osnabruck
192	Dijon	50	Dutch Frontier
91	Swiss Frontier	58½	Arnhem
55	Berne	49	Amsterdam
54	Lucerne	40	The Hague
144	Italian Frontier		
33	Milan		The Hague
182	Venice	115	Flushing
135	Austrian Frontier		
144	Bruck	12	Hook of Holland
135	Vienna		
43	Czechoslovakian Frontier	2,341½	Total.

ROUTES THROUGH EUROPE

ROUTE No. 4.

HOLLAND, GERMANY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, GERMANY, POLAND, ROMANIA, BULGARIA, TURKEY, GREECE, ALBANIA, YUGOSLAVIA, HUNGARY, AUSTRIA, ITALY, SWITZERLAND, FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

MILES

	Hook of Holland
12	Hague
82	Arnhem
	Flushing
68	Breda
66	Arnhem
58	German Frontier
50	Osnabruck
81	Hanover
88	Magdeburg
90	Berlin
	Hamburg
71	Ludwigslust
105	Berlin
119	Dresden
39	Czechoslovakian Frontier
68	Prague
97	German Frontier
66	Breslau
38	Polish Frontier
94	Lodz
87	Warsaw
118	Lublin
132	Lemberg (Lwow)
152	Romanian Frontier

MILES

100	Campu-Lung
102	Reghinul Sas
116	Brasov (Kronstadt)
79	Bucharest
40	Bulgarian Frontier
208	Sofia
92	Philippopolis
94	Turkish Frontier
18	Adrianople
141	Constantinople
141	Adrianople
18	Bulgarian Frontier
94	Philippopolis
92	Sofia
105	Greek Frontier
94	Salonika
157	Larissa
184	Athens
184	Larissa
230	Florina
22	Albanian Frontier
147	Durazzo
28	Tirana
69	Scutari
21	Yugo-Slavian Frontier
120	Ragusa
59	Metkovich

[continued]

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

ROUTE No. 4—*continued.*

MILES		MILES	
111	Sarajevo	55	French Frontier
195	Belgrade	91	Dijon
103	Vukovar	192	Paris
46	Hungarian Frontier	153	Belgian Frontier
126	Budapest	44	Brussels
125	Austrian Frontier		Brussels
38	Vienna	78	Ostend
135	Bruck		
144	Italian Frontier	30	Antwerp
135	Venice	12	Dutch Frontier
182	Milan	49	Flushing
33	Swiss Frontier		
144	Lucerne		
54	Berne	6,423	Total.

ROUTES THROUGH EUROPE

ROUTE No. 5.

FRANCE, GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA, ITALY, YUGO-SLAVIA, BULGARIA, ROMANIA, HUNGARY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BELGIUM.

MILES		MILES	
	Boulogne	138	Temisoara
154	Paris	44	Hungarian Frontier
191	Neufchâteau	134	Budapest
104	Colmar	125	Austrian Frontier
14	German Frontier	38	Vienna
16	Freiburg	43	Czechoslovakian
39	Swiss Frontier		Frontier
45	Zurich	34	Brno
69	Austrian Frontier	130	Prague
6	Feldkirch	78	Carlsbad
114	Innsbruck	37	German Frontier
24	Italian Frontier	40	Bayreuth
23	Fortezza	86	Wurzburg
47	Austrian Frontier	67	Frankfurt
85	Villach	79	Coblence
25	Yugo-Slavian	54	Cologne
	Frontier	51	Belgian Frontier
52	Zagreb	83	Brussels
284	Belgrade		
154	Nish		Brussels
74	Bulgarian Frontier	91	Flushing
27	Sofia		
208	Romanian Frontier	78	Ostend
40	Bucharest		
67	Pitesti	3,353	Total.
152	Orsova		

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

ROUTE No. 6.

ITALY, YUGO-SLAVIA, ALBANIA, GREECE, BULGARIA, ROMANIA,
HUNGARY, AUSTRIA, ITALY, SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE.

MILES		MILES	
	Dieppe	105	Sofia
114	Versailles	208	Romanian Frontier
	Havre	40	Bucharest
	134 Versailles	67	Pitesti
		152	Orsova
297	Lyon	138	Temisoara
140	Avignon	44	Hungarian Frontier
166	Nice	134	Budapest
18	Italian Frontier	125	Austrian Frontier
109	Genoa	38	Vienna
250	Venice	187	Salzburg
113	Trieste	117	Innsbruck
47	Fiume(Yugo-Slavian Frontier)	24	Italian Frontier
		23	Fortezza
214	Sebenico	30	Bolzano
132	Metkovich	171	Milan
59	Ragusa	89	Swiss Frontier
120	Albanian Frontier	120	Lausanne
21	Scutari	28	French Frontier
69	Tirana	100	Dijon
28	Durazzo	172	Reims
147	Greek Frontier	175	Boulogne
22	Florina		
104	Salonika	4,551	Total.
94	Bulgarian Frontier		

THE RULE OF THE ROAD

ROUTE No. 7.

HOLLAND, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, ROMANIA, BULGARIA,
YUGO-SLAVIA, ITALY AND FRANCE.

MILES		MILES	
	Hook of Holland	27	Yugo-Slavian Frontier
12	Hague		
82	Arnhem	74	Nish
	Flushing	154	Belgrade
68	Breda	194	Sarajevo
66	Arnhem	111	Metkovich
		132	Sebenico
58	German Frontier	214	Fiume (Italian Frontier)
50	Osnabruck	47	Trieste
81	Hanover	113	Venice
59	Harzburg	102	Cortina
86	Eisenach	67	Bolzano
135	Nurnberg	30	Fortezza
139	Austrian Frontier	23	Austrian Frontier
54	Linz	24	Innsbruck
111	Vienna	22	German Frontier
38	Hungarian Frontier	61	Munich
125	Budapest	198	French Frontier
150	Romanian Frontier	3	Strasbourg
9	Oradia Mare	221	Paris
208	Sibiu	154	Boulogne
87	Brasov		
79	Bucharest		
40	Bulgarian Frontier	3,783	Total.
208	Sofia		

THE RULE OF THE ROAD.

In all continental countries, except the following, the rule of the road is **KEEP TO THE RIGHT**, and overtake on the left. The exceptions are Austria (except Vorarlberg), Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Sweden and Gibraltar.

TIME.

All are aware that time varies in different parts of the world, but the knowledge of the exact deviation of time is less common. Actually, taking Greenwich as 0° , the clock is four minutes later for every degree W., and four minutes earlier for every degree E. As this obviously would prove an impracticable standard for everyday use, in 1883 was instituted the system of a Standard Time by Zones which, in place of the actual reckoning, substituted the division of the world into districts with a time calculated so many hours from Greenwich. Hence, for example there is a common time throughout the British Isles, while even the same time refers to the western part of the Continent.

Time in Europe has three distinct divisions. Greenwich or Western European time, Mid-European and Eastern European time.

The second division is one hour fast of Greenwich time, and the third division is two hours fast. The countries to which these times refer, can best be illustrated by the following diagram :



British Isles,
France, Belgium,
Spain, Channel
Islands, Algeria,
Gibraltar.



Czechoslovakia,
Germany, Norway,
Sweden, Denmark,
Italy, Switzerland,
Luxembourg,
Yugo-Slavia,
Albania, Tunis,
Malta, Sicily,
Sardinia, Austria,
Poland, Lithuania,
Hungary.



Bulgaria, Romania,
Turkey, Egypt,
Estonia (except
Reval), Latvia,
Finland, Palestine,
Syria, Cyprus,
Western Russia.

USEFUL TABLES

Exceptions to the general rule are Portugal, using Lisbon time, thirty-seven minutes slow. Greece using Athens time one hour thirty-five minutes fast, and Holland using Amsterdam time—twenty minutes fast.

Another difference is that in France, Italy, Spain and Belgium, the hours are reckoned from one to twenty-four, commencing from midnight, e.g. four o'clock in the afternoon in England is sixteen o'clock in these four countries.

Summer time (an hour in advance of mean time) is in force on the continent, in France, Belgium and Spain from the 2nd or 3rd Sunday in April, to the 1st Sunday in October, and in Holland from May 15th, to 1st Sunday in October.

This means that for all practical purposes Great Britain, France, Belgium and Spain are using Mid-European time during the summer months. For example, a traveller proceeding from France into Germany during July, would make no alteration to his watch. However, in the event of his return to France being later than the 1st Sunday in October, he would have to put his watch back an hour at the frontier.

As Holland has adopted Summer time hers will still be twenty minutes faster than Greenwich (summer) time, and also twenty minutes faster than Mid-European between the dates when Summer time is in force.

USEFUL TABLES.

KILOMETRES INTO MILES (APPROX.).

K.	M.	K.	M.	K.	M.	K.	M.
1	$\frac{5}{8}$	6	$3\frac{3}{4}$	20	$12\frac{3}{8}$	250	$155\frac{3}{8}$
2	$1\frac{1}{4}$	7	$4\frac{3}{8}$	30	$18\frac{5}{8}$	500	$310\frac{3}{4}$
3	$1\frac{7}{8}$	8	5	40	$24\frac{7}{8}$	750	$466\frac{1}{8}$
4	$2\frac{1}{2}$	9	$5\frac{5}{8}$	50	$31\frac{1}{8}$	1000	$621\frac{3}{8}$
5	$3\frac{1}{8}$	10	$6\frac{1}{4}$	100	$62\frac{1}{8}$	5000	$3106\frac{7}{8}$

THROUGH EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

MILES INTO KILOMETRES (APPROX.).

M.	K.	M.	K.	M.	K.	M.	K.
1	1.6	6	9.6	20	32.2	250	402.3
2	3.2	7	11.2	30	48.2	500	804.6
3	4.8	8	12.8	40	64.3	750	1206.9
4	6.4	9	14.4	50	80.4	1000	1609.3
5	8.0	10	16.0	100	161.0	5000	8046.5

MEASURES OF LENGTH

1 Metre	—	39.3701 Inches
1 Decametre	10 Metres	32.8084 Feet
1 Hectometre	100 Metres	109.3613 Yards
1 Kilometre	1000 Metres	0.6214 Miles
1 inch	2.5 cms.	
1 foot	30.48 cms.	3.048 decimetres
1 yard	9.144 decimetres	.9144 metres
1760 yards (1 mile)	16.092 hectometres	1.6 kilometres

WEIGHT AND LIQUID MEASURE

Kils.	cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	ozs.	litres	galls.	qts.
1	—	—	2	3.27	1	—	0.88
2	—	—	4	6.54	2	—	1.76
3	—	—	6	9.82	3	—	2.64
4	—	—	8	13.09	4	—	3.52
5	—	—	11	0.36	5	1	0.40
6	—	—	13	3.64	6	1	1.28
7	—	—	15	6.91	7	1	2.16
8	—	—	17	10.18	8	1	3.04
9	—	—	19	13.46	9	1	3.92
10	—	—	22	0.73	10	2	0.80
50	—	3	26	3.66	25	5	2.00
100	1	3	24	7.37	50	11	0.00
1000	19	2	20	9.73	75	16	2.00
					100	22	0.00

USEFUL TABLES

				Litres
1 oz.	(1 stone)	28.35 grams	1 pint	= .568
1 lb.		.4536 kilograms	2 pts. (1 qt.)	= 1.136
14 lbs.	(1 stone)	6.35 kilograms	4 qts. (1 gall.)	= 4.544
28 lbs.	(1 qtr.)	12.7 kilograms	5 galls.	= 22.720
1 cwt.	(4 qtrs.)	50.8 kilograms	10 galls.	= 45.44
20 cwt.	(1 ton)	1016 kilograms	100 galls.	= 454.4

MAP SCALES

TABLE OF USEFUL REPRESENTATIVE FRACTIONS

1/15,000	=	4.22 inches	to	1 mile
1/50,000	=	1.26	„ to „	
1/100,000	=	1.57 miles	to	1 inch
1/200,000	=	3.15	„ to „	
1/250,000	=	3.94	„ to „	
1/300,000	=	4.73	„ to „	
1/400,000	=	6.31	„ to „	
1/500,000	=	7.89	„ to „	
1/600,000	=	9.47	„ to „	
1/900,000	=	14.2	„ to „	
1/1,000,000	=	15.78	„ to „	
1/1,300,000	=	20.52	„ to „	
1/1,400,000	=	22.09	„ to „	
1/3,000,000	=	47.34	„ to „	

INDEX

- ABDUL HAMID becomes Sultan, 121
 his dread of assassination, 121
 Ablanica, 126
 an exciting night drive from, 127
 Achmet Zogu, President of Albania, 189
 difficulties confronting, 193
 interviews with, 194, 195
 A.D.A.C. (*see* Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobile Club)
 Adriatic Sea, 210, 211
 Ægean Sea, 153
 coastline awarded to Greece, 133
 Aeroplane, first aid for an, 65
 Aeroplanes, experiments for camouflaging, etc., 258-9
 rate of petrol consumption of, 36
 Aircraft attacks, super-searchlights and, 257-9
 Ak-Hissar, castle of, 190
 Albania, arrival at, 170
 British advisers for President of, 189
 change received by authors for English money in, 182
 compared with States along northern frontier of India, 195
 compulsory service in, 192
 difficulties of transportation in, 167
 during Great War, 184
 enrolled as member of League of Nations, 198
 footwear in, 172
 geographical centre of, 186
 independence proclaimed, 197
 Moslems of, 192
 neutrality violated in Great War, 198
 Albania, peasant dances of, 172
 President of, 189 *et seq.*
 result of association with Turkey, 196
 rosaries in common use in, 150
 signs of progress in, 174
 the only railway of, 173-4
 turbulent history of, 175
 wine trade of, 172-3
 winter life in, 185
 Albanian Legation, Sofia, hospitality at, 137
 Albanian proverb regarding the red fox, 171
 Alexander of Russia, Tsar, declares war on the Sultan, 122
 Alexander III, his wedding-present to Princess Elena, 203
 Alexander, King of Serbia, murder of, 228-9
 Alessio (*see* Lesh)
 Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobile Club of Munich, conference and lunch with, 36
 Alkmaar attacked by the Spaniards, 13
 Alps, harnessing the, 246
 Alsace, how plots of land are marked in, 256
 Alsace-Lorraine, the disputed provinces of, 255
 under German régime, 255
 Alsatian inns, vintages of, 256
 Altdorf, and its national hero, 252-3
 run to Lucerne from, 253
 Altenberg, 41
 Alt Ker, 231
 Alva, Duke of, 17
 American dollar as currency, 77-8, 102, 270

INDEX

- American journalist, an, and President Masaryk, 51-2
 Andorra, 132
 A.N.W.B., the (*see* Dutch Touring Club)
 Araba Konak Pass, 119, 127
 Arnheim, 11
 an "open air" museum at, 27
 as resort of retired Dutchmen, 16
 Sobsbeek Park, 16
 the Pays Bas Hotel, 15, 16
 Attar of roses, number of flowers required for ounce of, 122
 Austria, annexes Herzegovina and Bosnia, 211
 Milan as possession of, 249
 Austro-Hungarian border, crossing the, 241
 Austro-Italian frontier, road to, 243
 historic ground in Great War, 245
 Automobile Association, the, facilities afforded by, 272
 Autostrada (motor-way to Lake Maggiore), 250-1
 Avus Trabe (from Berlin to Potsdam), 31, 33
- BALATON, LAKE, fogas fish of, 239, 240
 Balkan, meaning of, 81
 Balkan Allies, peace terms with Turks, 197
 Balkan League, attacks Turkey, 196
 Balkan Mountains, the, highest point and passes in, 123
 strategical importance of, 123
 Balkan question, as menace to peace of Europe, 82, 84
 Balkan races, sturdiness of, 161
 Balkan States, as headquarters of gypsy race in Europe, 93
 as the powder-magazine of Europe, 81, 260
 cafés of, 166
 Balkan States, hints to motorists undertaking tour of, 262
 et seq.
 history of, 81 *et seq.*
 interspersed population of, 167
 leisurely methods prevalent in, 129-30, 137
 review of political situation in, 81 *et seq.*
 rivalry and jealousy between, 82, 83
 vehicles peculiar to Poland and, 64
 work of women of, 138
 Balkan Wars, 81, 197
 Bar-sur-Aube, an historic fight at, 258
 Basil, Byzantine Tyrant, his grim sense of humour, 147
 Bedroom, the largest in the world, 216
 Begova Dzamija (mosque at Sarajevo), 220-1
 Begg, feudal system of, in Kortcha, 171
 Belashitza Planina, 139
 Belfort, 257
 Belgrade, 230
 British Legation at, 227
 Sarajevo tragedy arranged at, 223
 the old palace, 228
 tomb of Unknown Soldier in, 229
 Bellinzona, 252
 Benes, Dr., interview with, 48-9
 Berlin, authors as guests of A.D.A.C. in, 36
 Hotel Adlon at, 31
 invitation to luncheon from A.C. Von Deutschland, 31
 reception following luncheon develops into a conference, 32
 tournée in a sports car, 32
 view from the air, 32
 Berlin Congress, a reminiscence of, 254
 award after Russo-Turkish War, 88

- Berszady group of Eastern Beskides, 77
 Beshik Dag, 151
 a hot drive over, 152
 Beskides, Western, 62
 Bessa, the Albanian, its value to travellers, 174
 Bessarabia, Romanian occupation of, 87
 summary of controversy over, 87-8
 Beveland, South, 12
 Bielefeld, *en route* for, 25
 Bigla Pass, as link in Allied front during the War, 169
 climbing the, 168-9
 shrine on summit of, 169
 splendour of, 156
 Bilishti, arrival at, 170
 Birjari of Bucharest, and their religious observances, 110, 111
 Bistritsa, 92, 97
 northern point of Saxon clans of Transylvania, 96
 Bistritsa River, 144
 excursions by raft on, 108
 Bjela, 119
 Black Mountain, land of the (*see* Montenegro)
 Blood feuds, a Montenegrin veteran's reminiscences of, 208
 Blood-vengeance, law of, still upheld in Albania, 175-6
 Bocche di Cattaro, 206 *et seq.*
 Bohemia, one-time independent kingdom of, 50
 Bojki (Ruthenian mountaineers), 77
 Boleslav (or Jungbunzlau), approach to, 57
 the Grand Hotel at, 57
 Bolsheviks, and Romanian occupation of Bessarabia, 78
 turned back by Polish women and children, 69, 75
 Borculo, "strafed" by a typhoon, 17-18
 Boris, King, an instance of his good nature, 135-6
 Boris, King, his memory for faces and events, 135
 palace at Vrana, 134
 versatility of, 135
 Borromean Islands, scenery of, 251
 Bosch, Herr Robert, "father" of magnetos, 238
 Bosna Serai (*see* Sarajevo)
 Bosnia, anti-Austrian conspiracies in, 223-4
 Austrian annexation of, 211, 220
 its appeal to motorists, 230
 Bosniak host, a genial, 225
 Bosniaks, charm of, 221
 Bosnian villages, Sunday scenes in, 218
 Bossu, Count de, Commander of Spanish Fleet, 13
 Boy Scout encountered in Yugo-Slavia, 226
 Brandenburg, road repairing scenes in, 29
 Brasov (Kronstadt), 104
 Breakfast, the Dutch, 16, 18
 Breslau, arrival at, 58
 Funkstunde (wireless station) at, 58
 Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten at, 58
 Brigands of the Balkans, 214-15
 Brissago, Swiss frontier near, 252
 British collieries, how they may be saved, 35
 Brunswick, houses (half-timbered) of, 28
 Bucharest, 90
 a Royal residence in, 107
 arrival at, 105
 climatic conditions of, 105
 cosmopolitanism of, 110
 model garages in, 109
 population of, 105
 the Birjari of, 110
 Treaty of, 154
 Buckingham, significance of its name, 86
 Buda, Magyar settlement at, 236
 Budapest, authors banqueted by Automobile Club at, 137-8

INDEX

- Budapest, charms of, 238, 239
 Communism in (1919), 236
 Franz Josef Quay at, 238
 Bukovina, Austrian annexation of, 86
 Bulgaria, Aegean Sea coastline question and, 133
 autonomy for, 81
 averts a crisis, 83
 costumes of villagers, 132
 defeated in second Balkan War, 197
 flora and fauna of, 122, 123
 off-loading of authors' car in, 118
 peasantry of, 124
 percentage of population of, mobilized in Great War, 123-4
 population of, 132
 settles down to work of reconstruction, 132-3
 war casualties of, 124
 Bulgarian dances and dancers, 132
 Bungalow towns for refugees in Macedonia, 152
- CAMPINA, 105
 Campu-Lung, 92
Caniveaux, explanation of, 138
 Cannosa, giant plane tree at, 215
 historic associations of, 214
 Carillons, Dutch, 6
 Carlsbad, beauty of its surroundings, 53
 the waters of, 53
 (*see also* Karlovy Vary)
 Carnegie, Andrew, and The Hague Palace of Peace, 8
 Carpathians, the, 62, 77, 88, 90, 92
 Casimir the Great rebuilds Lwow, 76
 Castelnuovo, 230
 a halt in, 210-11
 Castle Peles, residence of Princess Helena of Romania, 107
- Cattaro, climb from valley of Cetinje to, 205
 insect pests of, 209
 lack of hotel accommodation in, 209
 open-air café on the Marina, 209
 Celts in Italy, 248
 Central and Eastern Europe, difficulties experienced by motorists in, 234-5
 Cernauti (Czernowitz), arrival at, 80, 86
 Cetinje, 184
 first impression of, 201
 palace at, 202
 the monastery at, 205
 Chakirka Mountain, waterfalls of, 162
 Charlemagne, takes Milan, 249
 Chatham, Earl of, and a British military disaster in Holland, 5
 Chaumont, an ancient inn and its associations, 260
 Cicero visits Salonika, 153
 Cigar smokers, Dutch children as, 4
 Cinvad, 43
 Cuno Brdo, 231
 Coal, question of distillation of oil from, 33 *et seq.*
 Coal Commission report, and question of fuel supply, 35
 Coblenz, how depreciation of the mark affected an old resident, 30
 Coffee, primitive method of grinding in Bulgarian wayside villages, 126
 Constantine the Great, nationality of, 189
 Constantinople, Roman road from Durazzo to, 153, 174
 Continental countries, rule of the road in, 287
 Contour map of mountain ranges, a huge, 204
 Coppersmiths of Albania, 173
 Cotroceni, Queen Marie's palace at, 107

INDEX

- Cracow, tombs of Polish kings in, 62
 Crimean War, 87
 Croatia, attractions of, 230
 Customs duties in Warsaw, 68
 Cyclists, road tax for, in Holland, 15
 special track for (Rijwiel-pad), 11
 Czechoslovakia, 41
 conformation of, 42
 name for ancient kingdom of Bohemia, 42
 road development in, 44, 45
 Czech towns, a notable feature for motorists in, 45
 Czechs, as linguists, 56
 Czernowitz (*see* Cernauti)
- DACIAN descent of Romanians, 91
 Dalmatia, gateway to, 207
 Dalmatian coast, attractions of, 230
 looting and piracy along, 213-14
 Dalmatian question, settlement of, 83
 Dambovitza, River, 105
 Danube, the, as Bulgarian frontier, 113
 embarkation of authors' car on, 116 *et seq.*
 new bridge over, 231
 slow crossing of, 231
 tributaries of, 87
 Dedeagach, Allied Powers' proposal regarding, 133
 Defence League of Albanian Nationality framed, 196
 Delft, historical associations of, 6
 Nieuwe Kerk, 7
 Oude Kerke and its leaning spire, 7
 Demirhissar, collision between Greeks and Bulgars at, 134
 situation of, 149
 Devil's Bridge, St. Gothard's Pass, 252
 Diocletian, nationality of, 189
 Disraeli, addresses Berlin Congress, 254, 255
 Djumaya, 138
 Dniester, head waters of the, 77
 Dogs, Dutch, 4, 5
 Doorn, ex-Kaiser's residence at, 14
 Draga, Queen, murder of, 228
 Drave, River, 243
 Dresden, historical associations of, 38 *et seq.*
 lure of, 37
 Opera House in, 40
 Drin Valley, 191
 Drina River, wattle bridge over tributary of, 226
 Drinking water imported from Italy, 188
 Dubrovnik (*see* Ragusa)
 Dupnitsa, 137
 Durazzo, 185
 a Roman highway to Constantinople from, 153, 174
 Allies sink enemy submarine at, 185
 authors' arrival at, 187
 hints for tourists to, 188
 incidents of authors' stay at, 188
 Hotel Splendid Palace at, 187
 mosquito pest of, 188
 railway, under construction, to Tirana, 174
 Dutch language, first impressions of, 2
 Dutch Touring Club (A.N.W.B.), 10
- "EAGLETS" (girl and boy scouts) of Lwow, 75
 Earthquake (1928) in Djumaya district, 139
 Eastern Beskides, 77
 Eastern Europe, hints to motorists visiting, 68
 Edam, 12
 Edessa (*see* Vodená)
 Edward VII, King, his love of Marienbad, 54
 Egypt, Jewish migration from, 94

INDEX

- Elbasan, authors' drive to, 185
 incident on journey to, 186
 mosques and bazaars of, 187
 oriental atmosphere of, 187
 population of, 187
 various sects in, 187
- Elena, Princess, marries Crown Prince of Italy, 202
- Etruscans, evicted by Celts in Milan, 248
- Europe, first recorded appearance of gypsies in, 94
 most amazing road in, 206 *et seq.*
 some suggested alternative tours through, 280 *et seq.*
- FAN NOLI, supersession of, 193
- Feketchazy, 231
- Ferdinand of Bulgaria, King, and building of Sofia, 134
- Fertilizers, artificial, and their value, 34
- Fischer, Carl, inaugurates Wandervogel movement, 41
- Florina, 229
 departure from, 168
 experiences at, 166
 garrison and ruined Turkish citadel at, 167
 road from Voden to, 164
 situation of, 167
- Fox, the, regarded as sign of good luck, 171
- France, and Romania, 88
 her activity in aerial matters, 257-9
- Francis Ferdinand, Archduke, assassination of, 222-4
- Franzensbad, 53
- Frederick the Great, and Potsdam, 33
- Friesland, 12
- GABRINOVICH, and the Sarajevo tragedy, 223
- Galicia, advance of Russian army into, 87
- Galicia, granted self-government, 76
- Gallikos, River, 159
- Garlic, as cure for malaria, 160
- Gas and electrical distribution in Germany, 34
- German Silesia ceded to Prussia (1757), 59
- Germany, depreciation of the mark in, 29
 distillation of oil from coal in, 34, 35
 excellence of roads in, 28-9
 her coal and mineral resources in Silesia, 59
 impressions of the new, 23
 municipal fruit trees in, 22
 national beverage of, 26
 reception in, 20
 tribute to hotels of, 30
 wayside inns of, 25, 41
- Ghegs of Albania, 181
- Giurgiu, a difficult embarkation at, 116 *et seq.*
 authors welcomed by Préfet of, 114
 frontier between Romania and Bulgaria, 111
 wells on road to, 113
- Gitano (Spanish gypsies), 93
- Gladstone, Right Hon. W. E., and Abdul Hamid, 121
- Glashutte, a cloud-burst at, 40
- Gorgany Mountains, 77
- Graeco-Bulgarian dispute (1925), 132, 133
- Grain, as revenue in Macedonia under Turkish régime, 149
- Grape gathering in Southern Romania, 111
- Graz, explored by authors, 241
 historical associations of, 241
 the museum, 241-2
- Great Powers, the, and Albania, 197
- Great War, a waiter's opinion on Allies' terms, 24
 instance of Russian military despotism in, 74
- Greece, authors' arrival in, 144
 becomes autonomous, 81
 ex-Queen of, 107

INDEX

- Greece, present-day situation
in, 83-4
reduced value of notes in,
158-9
road finance responsible for
reconstructed Cabinet in,
145
sequence of troubles in, 168
Greek Free Zone initiated at
Salonika, 133
Greek Touring and Automobile
Club, chat with a member
of, 155
Greeks, occupy Kortcha, 196
Grigorescu, M., Préfet of Giur-
giu, 114, 115
Gronder, a closed road to, 21
Gura Humorului, 90
Gypsies, and their origin, 93-4
banned in various countries,
94
- HAGUE, THE, approach to, 7
Bosch woodlands of, 7, 8
picture galleries and build-
ings in, 7
Peace Conference of 1907, 9
the Palace of Peace, 8
Han Hoti clan of Catholics, 192
Hanover, charms of, 26
Harmantswillerkopf, an heroic
defence by the French, 257
Health, hints for conservation
of, in hot climes, 160
Hein, Pierre (Piet Hein), tomb
of, 7
Helona, Princess, of Romania,
107
Herzegovina, annexation of,
211
chief city of, 216
Herzegovinians, national cos-
tume of, 211
Himalayas, long-distance con-
versation as art in the, 207
Hindenburg, in retirement, 26
Holland, bulb culture in, 10
classical costumes of, 12
cleanliness the vice of, 3
Customs authorities of, 2
Holland, dress and fashions
in, 4
genius for colour in, 18
historical associations with
Britain, 5
infantile smokers in, 4
market-day scenes in, 12
means of transport in, 4
prices in, 18, 19
Roman occupation of, 12
sun-bonneted cows in, 3
windmills of, 3, 10
Holland, Hook of, first im-
pressions of, 2
Home Rule, earliest example
of, 153
Irish, inspired by Czech
National movement, 56
Horgos, 234
Hotels, authors' reflections on,
266
Hradčany Castle, Prague, 45, 48
Hucules, tribe of, 77
Hungarian frontier, one-time
site of, 105
Hungarian horses, a fine pair
of, 233
Hungarian meal, a typical, 239
Hungary, attitude of, towards
Treaty of Trianon, 96
difficulties of passage of
frontier into, 234
feeling aroused by Versailles
Conference award in, 84
gypsies of, 93
villages and peasants of, 236
Hunyady Janos, Castle of, 96
- ILEANA, PRINCESS, 107
Illness, common causes of, 161
Illyrian Provinces, creation of,
215
International Peace Con-
ference, the first, 8
Ipek, 184
Ismail Kemal Bey, convenes
meeting of Albanian leaders
at Valona, 196
Italian soldiery, appearance of,
and their friendliness, 246

INDEX

- Italy, and the Albanian question, 83
 curiosity displayed regarding authors' car in, 245, 247
 financial assistance accorded to Albania, 193
 question of homogeneity a difficult one for, 246-7
 road to, from Austria, 245
- JABLANICA, 218
 Javor Planina, 225
 Jicin, 58
 Jungbunzlau (*see* Boleslav)
- KARLOVY VARY (Carlsbad),
 lunch with President Masaryk at, 50
 Karst country, difficulty of cultivation in, 212
 Kavaja, 187
 Kazanlik, rose gardens of, 123
 Kecsksmet, vegetable and fruit culture at, 237
 Kepno, 63
 Kisker, 231
 Klagenfurt, 243
 Kolomea, 78, 79
 Konigshan, 58
 Konjica, town and village tolls charged at, 224
 Kortcha, 161
 circuitous road from Tirana to, 174
 democracy in, 180
 English-speaking Albanian as guide in, 171
 Florina-Salonika road to, 163, 170
 market scenes in, 171-2, 173
 primitive method of wine making in, 172-3
 story of a strange crime in, 176-81
 various costumes seen in, 173
 Koula, insanitary dwellings of, 143
 its many changes of nationality, 142
- Krakow, children trained to fight Bolsheviks in, 69
 Kralyevo, 184
 Kresne Defile, 138, 139
 Kronstadt (*see* Brasov)
 Kruje, description of, 190, 191
 Krum, Tsar, how he celebrated his victory over Roman Emperor, 147
 Krusnohor, Czech name for Erz Gebirge, 42
- LANDESHUT, 58
 Langros, plateau of, 257, 258
 League of Nations, and Albania, 198
 Bulgarian faith in, 132
 Leo XIII, Pope, anecdotes by a traveller concerning, 244-5
 Lesh (Alessio), 191
 Letter-writers, professional, 222
 Leyden, Town Hall of, 10
 Liebau, 58
 Likovan, 152
 Livunovo, 139
 Locarno, brief stay at, 252
 Lodz, before and after Great War, 63
 Lombards, Milan under rule of, 249
 Lombardy, capital of, 248
 London, authors' return to, 260
 Long-distance talking, examples of, 206
 Louis XIV annexes Alsace, 256
 Lovchen, descent to Cattaro, 207, 209
 surrendered by Montenegrins, 208-9
 Lowicz, national costumes worn in, 65
 Loznica-Valjevo road, 225
 Lublin, Hotel Victoria at, 70-1
 Jewish population of, 71
 Lucerne, as tourists' Mecca, 253
 beauty of road from Altdorf to, 253
 complimentary luncheon in, 254

INDEX

- Lucerne, sights of, 254
 Luggage, hints as to what to take on European tour, 275 *et seq*
 Lutzow, Count, death and burial place of, 56
 versatility of, 55
 Lutzow, Countess, 56
 Lwow, arrival at, 75
 chequered history of, 76
 crude oil first distilled at, 76
 fish market of, 76
 reminscences of Great War in, 75
 women and children turn back advancing Bolsheviks, 75
- MACEDONIA, a non-existent bridge in : authors' narrow escape, 161
 cosmopolitan population of, 148, 167
 fertility of, 148
 rosaries common among inhabitants of, 150
 storied past of, 147
 under the Turk, 149
 volcanic origin of, 148
- Magdeburg, recollections of, 29
 Maggiore, Lake, road to Swiss frontier from, 251
 scenic delights of, 251
 Magyars of Hungary, 236
- Malaria, Macedonian peasants' cure for, 160
 usual specifics for, 160
- Maliebaan, the (triple avenue of lime trees on Utrecht-Arnhem road), 14
- Malik, Lake, 138
- Malissori (mountain men from north of the Drin), 192
- Map, a confusing, 231
- Map scales, table of useful representative fractions, 291
- Maps with names in Cyrillic characters, 131, 266
- Marburg, 243
- Margaret Island as Hungarian society rendezvous, 238-9
- Maria Theresa of Austria-Hungary, cession of German Silesia to Prussia by, 59
- Maria Theresiopel, 234
- Marie, Queen of Romania, activities of, 107
- Marienbad, 53, 54
- Mark, the, experiences of depreciation and revaluation of, 29, 30
- Marken, 12
- Marmont, Marshal, builder of coast road from Ragusa, 215
 title of Duke of Ragusa conferred on, 215
- Marmures forest, 191
- Mary, Queen, of Yugo-Slavia, 107
- Masaryk, Jan, on the establishment of new state of Czechoslovakia, 42
 visit to Carlsbad with, 53
- Masaryk, President, and establishment of Czechoslovakia, 42, 49, 50
 and an American journalist, 51-2
 as *littérateur*, 51
 interest in motor touring, 52
- Mati (Moslem clan) of Albania, 192
- Mati River, a ferro-concrete bridge across, 191
- Metkovich, 215, 216
- Michael, boy-King of Romania, 106, 107
 Regents of, 107
- Mikolajow, 76
- Milan, historical associations of, 248 *et seq.*
 republic discarded for monarchy, 249
 Serbian refugees reach, 185
 the cathedral, 249-50
- Mirdite clan, evil reputation of, 192
- Moglena hills, 159
- Moklovia, River, 108
- Monastir plain, crops of, 168

INDEX

- Money: currency hints to motorists, 270
 Mont Airque, a super-search-light on, 258
 Montenegrins, pro-Russian proclivities of, 203
 reputed honesty of, 205-6
 Montenegro, 184
 a typical warrior of, 207
 becomes a province of Yugo-Slavia, 199, 209
 example of long-distance talking in, 206
 roads of, 201
 Moslem population, of Albania, 187, 188, 191, 192
 of Bosnia, 218
 Mosquitoes, a restless night caused by, 142
 of Malik, 183
 Mostar, 230
 cosmopolitan population of, 216-17
 Neretva Hotel at, 216
 town and village tolls paid at, 224
 Motor bicycle, a vodka-fed, 112
 Motoring, authors' experiences of cost of, 268
 joys of, 261
 the bane of, 108
 Motorists, charged village and town tolls in Yugo-Slavia, 224
 difficulties encountered in Holland by, 5, 15
 precautions against sickness in malarial countries, 160
 useful hints to, concerning Balkan tour, 262 *et seq.*
 Motorways, proposed trans-European, 46
 Mulhouse, industries of, 255
 Münster, recollections of a visit to, 23-5
 Mur, River, 241, 243
 Murder, by a father in Albania, 176-81
 Museums, Austrian, 242
 German and Dutch enthusiasm for, 26, 27
 Mussolini, Signor, 250-1
 Mussolini, and conflict between Italy and Yugo-Slavia, 83
 evidences of his energy and decision, 247
 reminiscences of, retailed by the host of a wayside restaurant, 248
 NAPOLEON, crowned as King of Italy, 249
 efforts to recover power in 1813, 38 *et seq.*
 installs French representative at Ragusa, 215
 restores Posen to Poland, 59
 Napoleonic wars (1814), 38-40, 258, 260
 Narenta Gorge, features of, 218
 Narenta, River, 216
 famous bridge spanning, 217
 National Bank of Albania created on Italian money, 193
 Nationalist movement in Kortcha, 181
 Naumovitch, Colonel, and the murder of King and Queen of Serbia, 228-9
 Nepolocauti, 80
 Neuilly, Treaty of, Bulgaria's compliance with, 133
 Nicholas, King of Montenegro, 202
 bans literature of foreign origin, 204
 betrothal of his many daughters, 202
 his judgment of men governed by their exploits, 203
 Nicholas I, Tsar, and rebellious Poles, 66
 Nicholas II, Tsar, and the first International Peace Conference, 8
 Nicholas, Prince (Regent for boy-King of Rumania), 107, 108
 as automobilist, 107
 Nidje Planina, slopes of, 165
 Nisja Voda River, 162

INDEX

- North-West Autoklub welcome authors in Czechoslovakia, 43
 Nova Paka, 58
 Novi Sad, arrival at, 230
- OIL, distilled from coal, 33
et seq.
 importance of adequate supply to Great Britain of, 35
 Oilfields, of Galicia, 76
 Oisterwijk, 11
 Oker, 231
 Okhrida, description of journey on foot to Elbasan from, 185
 Okhrida, Lake, 168, 183
 O'Mahoney Home for refugee Armenian boys, 130
 Onions, as cure for malaria, 160
 Order of the Lead Seal, 43
 Ostrovo, Lake, 163
- PAGNIA, pirates of, 213-14
 Painting, Dutch school of, 11
 Palace of Peace at The Hague, 8, 9
 Paris, world's greatest search-light in, 259
 Parun Dager, incipient rebellion in valleys of, 195
 Pasicero, Serbian name for, 231
 Paskevitch, Marshal, and the Polish revolt of 1830, 67
 Passports, hints to motorists on, 234-5, 272
 Paul, Saint, at Thessalonica (Salonika), 153
 Peace treaties, reflections on, 125, 246
 Peasants' dwellings *en route* for Giurgiu, 113
 Pedlars of Salonika, 157
 Pelisor Castle, Sinaia, 106
 Percy, General Sir Jocelyn, and the Albanian Gendarmerie, 192, 193
 host at Scutari, 192
 Peroutka, Dr., Minister of Commerce for Czechoslovakia, 49
 Petlura fiasco of 1918-19, 75
- Petrich, 139
 an undesirable hotel in, 140
 arrival at, 140
 linguistic difficulties in, 140
 "strafed" by Greek bands, 141
 street scenes in, 141
 Photography, wisdom of taking two cameras, 279
 Piste, the (alluvial plain formed by the Struma), 150, 151
 Pleosti, 105
 Plevna (*see* Plevna)
 Plevna (Pleven), arrival at, 119
 historic siege of, 119 *et seq.*
 rose-growing industry of, 122
 Plum brandy, 111, 136
 Podgoritsa, 184, 229
 arrival at: and a *contre-temps*, 200
 unique industry of, 201
 Pogradets, 183
 Poland, Jews in, 64, 71-2
 partitions of, 59
 population of, 64
 telescopic four-wheeled carts of, 64
 traffic on country roads, 64
 village wedding and betrothal customs in, 62
 Poles, conservative instincts of, 73
 Population, post-war rise in Europe, 46
 Potsdam, apparent petrol shortage at, disproved, 30-1
 appreciative stories of British troops in Great War told at, 32
 view from the air, 37
 visit to, 33
 Pottery-making in Albania, primitive, 172
 Praga, 70
 Prague, Alchymists' Alley, 49
 alternative route from Carlsbad to, 54
 banks in—and a warning, 55
 Charles Bridge and old Castle, 45, 48

INDEX

- Prague, curious astronomical clock in, 49
 Jewish Synagogue in, 49
 present and past, 46
 social gatherings at, 56
 traffic regulations in, 45
 Predeal Pass, the, tribute to engineers of, 104
 Pribicencero, Serbian name for, 231
 Princip, and the Sarajevo tragedy, 223-4
 Prizren, 184
 Prut, River, 86
 valley of the, 78
 Priespa, Lake, 168
 Przemyśl, 77
- QUININE, as anti-malaria specific, 160
- RAGUSA (Dubrovnik), 230
 an officious policeman at, 212
 and the slave trade, 213
 becomes a Venetian dependency, 213
 ceases to be a republic, 215
 independence guaranteed to, 214
 one-time importance of, 213
 "the Pearl of the Adriatic," 211
 Rathenau, and the Upper Silesian question, 59
 Red Indians, smoke cloud signalling by, 206
 Refugee village beyond the Vardar, 159
 Reghinul-Sas, authors' experiences at, 98-9
 Rembrandt, birthplace of, 10
 Rhine tour, an expensive, 29, 30
 Rijwielpad, meaning of, 11
 Roads, British, their superiority to those of Europe, 108, 113
 Yugo-Slavian, 225, 227, 230
 Rocky Gulch, episode of, 165
 Rodolphe II, Emperor, and his Alchymists, 49
- Romania, as fruit country, 111
 becomes an independent nation, 81
 costumes of peasantry in, 97
 dust as bane of motoring in, 107, 108
 enters Great War, 92
 frontier of, 78
 gypsies of, 93
 its chequered history, 91-2
 last stand in Great War, 81
 national dish of, 111
 night shooting by automobile in, 108
 picturesque costumes of, 112
 pre-war and present day population of, 95, 96
 pro-French sentiment in, 88
 racial complexities in, 91
 refuses suggestion of plebiscite, 87
 resources of, 96
- Romans, the, as road makers, 153, 174
 in Romania, 91
 in Salonika, 153
- Romero, Senor, 128
 authors as guests of, 131
 death of, 128 (note)
- Roszkcszentmihálytelek, 234, 235
- Royal Bulgarian Automobile Club, consideration shown to authors by, 118-19, 128, 131
- Rupel defile, its aspect, and importance, 146
 storied past of, 146-7
- Ruschuk, welcome by Royal Bulgarian Automobile Club at, 118 *et seq.*
- Russell, Lord, and Disraeli, 254-5
- Russia, and Bessarabia, 87, 88
 corruption in army before and after Great War, 75
- Russo-Japanese War, outbreak of, 9
- Russo-Turkish war, 81
 action of Albania following, 196

INDEX

- Russo-Turkish War, and the
award of Congress of
Berlin, 88
origin of, 121
recollections of an historic
siege during, 119 *et seq.*
- Ruthenian foundation of
Lwow, 76
Hucule tribe of, 77
- Ryswyk, treaty of (1697), 7
- ST. GOTHARD PASS, ascent to,
252
- St. Naum, monastery of, 183
- Salonika, a polyglot port, 154
as export doorway of Mace-
donia, 147-8
bazaars of, 156
British-built chaussée to
Seres from, 151
chat with a fellow auto-
mobilst at, 155-6
en route for, 138
granted autonomy under the
Romans, 153
great fire of, 154
Great West Road of, 159
Greek Free Zone initiated
at, 133
in Turkish possession, 154
life in byways of, 157
origin of, 153-6
roads of, 158
Romans erect theatres at, 153
street scenes in, 155
traffic rules in, 152-3
- Salt trade, of Yugo-Slavia, 214
- Samuel, Bulgar Tsar, defeated
at Seres, 147
- Sarajevo (Bosna Serai), 230
exciting drive to, 219
Hotel Europe at, 220
Moslem quarter and bazaars
of, 220 *et seq.*
tragedy which started Great
War, 219, 222-3
- Sarajevo-Zvornik road, 225
- Save, River, crossed by barge,
230
- Schoolroom, a quaint Sara-
jevan, 221-2
- Scutari (Skodar), 185
arrival at, 191
Grand Hotel at, 192
market day scenes in, 192
Russian prisoners construct
road from Tirana to, 190
- Searchlights, super-, 257-9
- Serbia, as alleged instigator
of Sarajevo tragedy, 223
becomes a separate nation, 81
defeats Turks and occupies
Monastir, 196
- Serbo-Bosnian nationalism,
conspiracies for, 223
- Serbo-Hungarian frontier, the,
curious alignment of, 235-6
- Serbo-Turkish War, 121
- Seres, 147
British-built chaussée from
Salonika to, 151
- Sereth, River, 86, 108
- Sesto Calende, terminus of
autostrada at, 251
- Seton-Watson, Mr., tribute to
President Masaryk by, 51
- Sheep-dogs, Macedonian, 163,
164
- Shkumbi, River, 181, 185
- "Shkypetar," name given by
Pyrrhus to his Albanian
troops, 185, 192
- Shoes made from motor tyres,
171-2
- Sidney, Sir Philip, heroism of,
17
- Sighisoara, authors' experi-
ences in, 100 *et seq.*
- Signboards, with directions in
Cyrillic characters, 139, 265
- Silesia, alleged characteristic
of Germans of, 58
- Silesian question, difficulties
and dangers of, 59
- Sinaia, amenities of, 106
the Monte Carlo of Romania,
104, 106
- Siret, breakfast at, 89
- Siret River valley, 90
- Skanderberg, as national hero
of Albania, 190
- Skodar (*see* Scutari)
- Skole, 77

INDEX

- Slivovitza (plum brandy), 136,
219 (*cf.* Tuica)
- Sniatyn, 78
authors' experiences at,
79-80
- Sobotka, 58
- Sofia, a meal cooked in Bul-
garian style at, 136
activities of a Parnelite in,
130
arrival at, 128
ex-King Ferdinand's con-
struction of, 134
farewell to, 137
introduction to social life of,
131
population of, 129
the loftiest capital in Europe,
128
- Spaghetti, as national dish in
Italy, 250
- Spain, an unpleasant ex-
perience in, 21
- Spanish War of Succession,
and Milan, 249
- Stanislawow, 76
American currency accepted
in, 78
- Staphorst, 12
- Stara Planina Mountains, 119,
125
- Stavoren, 12
- Steed, Mr., and President
Masaryk, 53
- Steel girders, English, ex-
ported to Albania, 167
- Stephen, St., King of Hungary,
236
- Steuerkarte, explanation of, 20
- Stirling, Colonel, adviser to
Albanian Government, 189
- Stresa, 251
- Struma flat, compared with
a frying-pan, 149, 150
- Struma River, 139, 144
- Struma Valley, mosquitoes of,
142
- Strumnitsa Valley, Petrich as
centre for exploration of,
141
- Styria, arrival in, 241
- Styrj, 76, 77
- Subotica, 234
- Suceava, 90
- Swiss Guard, the Papal, 254
- Swiss Legions, the Lucerne
memorial to, 254
- Szabadka, and its alternative
names, 234
- Szeged, 234, 236
- TABLES, for conversion of kilo-
metres into miles, and
miles into kilometres, 289,
290
of measures of length, 290
of weight and liquid measure,
290-1
- Tarvis, and its wayside café, 246
- Tatra, the, 62
- Tell, William, his place in
affection of his country-
men, 253
statue of, 252
- Tomcs, River, 104
- Templchofer Feld, aeroplane
trip from, 32
- Tennyson cited, 203
- Teplitz-Schonau (Teplice), 43
- Terezin, 45
- Texel, van Tromp's heroic
fight off, 6, 7
- Thessalonica, Biblical name for
present-day Salonika, 153
- Time, variations of, in different
parts of the world, 288-9
- Tirana, an obliging bank
manager at, 189
old and new, 188-9
railway, under construction,
from Durazzo to, 174
signs of progress in, 189
- Tirnovo, former capital of
Bulgaria, 126
industries of, 126
- Tisza, River, 236
- Tittoni, Signor, and Albania,
197, 198
- Tobacco culture in Bulgaria,
139
- Topola Backa, cross-country
journey to, and its diffi-
culties, 231-2

INDEX

- Topola Backa, dinner party at,
and a kindly host, 232-3
- Toni (British Legation Drago-
man at Durazzo), 188
- Tosks of Albania, 181
- Trajan, victory over the
Dacians, 91
- Transylvania, 88, 104
mixed population of, 96
- Trebinjeica, River, 212
- Treuenbrietzen, visit to, 37
- Trianon, Treaty of, 96
- Tromp, Admiral van, burial-
place of, 6, 7
career of, 6, 7
- Trutnov, 58
- Tuica (brandy brewed from
plums), 111
Slav name for, 136, 219
- Turkey, harsh treatment of
Macedonia by, 149, 150
peace terms with Balkan
Allies, 197
- Turks, evicted from Albania,
196
- Tzigane (gypsies), as musicians,
93
meeting with a party of, 92
et seq.
origin of, 93
- UKRAINE frontier, 79
- Ukrainian invasion of Lwow,
memories of, 75
- Umbrians dispute Celtic pos-
session of Milan, 249
- "Underground" Polish Move-
ment of the 'nineties,
centre of, 63
- "Union or Death Society,"
and the Sarajevo tragedy,
223-4
- Upper Silesia question, German
opinion of, 59
- Uskogs, deportation of, 214
- Utrecht, antiquity of, 11, 12
architectural beauties of, 14
St. Martin's Church, 11, 12
- VALJEVO, difficult road to
Belgrade from, 227
- Valona, Albanian independence
proclaimed at, 197
- Vardar, 159
- Venezia, plains of, war associ-
ations of, 246
- Venice, old-time navy of, 213
- Ventrok, Lake, 168
- Versailles Conference, award
of Hungarian territory to
Yugo-Slavia by, 84
award regarding Macedonia,
148
- Via Britannica, from Salonika
to Seres, 151
- Via Egnatia (Roman highway
from Durazzo to Constan-
tinople), 153, 174, 185
- Vicenza, past and present, 246
- Vicenza-Milan road, 247
- Villach, fellow-motorist met at
—and his anecdotes, 244-5
how authors' car was garaged
at, 244
medieval character of, 243
- Village dances, Romanian, 98
- Village innkeeper, influence of,
in Romania, 113
- Village life in Poland, 73
- Vineyards of southern
Romania, 111
- Vistula, the, 70
- Vodena (Edessa), polyglot pop-
ulation of, 162
- Vodka, a Briton's opinion of,
112
- Volendam, 12
- Vosges Mountains, a quaint inn
on slopes of, 256
- Vrana, glory of its gardens
and orchards, 134
palace of King Boris at, 134
- WAGNER, as conductor at
Dresden Opera House, 40
- Walcheren, British military
reverse in (1809), 5
- Wallachian plain, 105
- Wandervogels of Germany, 41
- War, necessity of British com-
mand of the air in, 35-6

INDEX

- Warsaw, authors' welcome in, 67
 before the War, 66
 British-trained police of, 68
 broadcasting from Auto Klub at, 69
 first impressions of, 65
 grave of the Unknown Soldier at, 69
 Jewish population of, 65
 scenes *en route* to, 63
 traffic conditions in, 68
 the citadel, 66, 67
 Wartenberg, 61
 Water buffaloes of the Balkans, 162
 White Mountains, Protestant Czechs defeated at (1620), 50
 William of Wied, Prince, becomes King of Albania, 197
 leaves Durazzo, 184, 198
 William the Silent, tomb of, 7
 Windmills in Holland, 3, 10
 Windsor of Berlin (*see* Potsdam)
 Wine, as national beverage in southern Romania, 111
 how made in Albania, 172-3
 Montenegro, 205
 Wolf-hunting in Romania, 108
- YANTRA, RIVER, 126
 Yenidje Vardar, one-time Turkish village at, 162
 Yugo-Slavia, and Italy, 193
 and the Albanian question, 83
- Yugo-Slavia, and the Versailles Conference award, 84
 appeal of, to the motorist, 229-30
 capital of, 227
 efforts for unity in, 84
 hotel accommodation of, 229-30
 new appellation of Austro-Hungarian place names in, 212
 population of, 229
 system of town and village tolls in, 224
- ZAGREB, its appeal to motorists, 230
 Zakoplane, as tourist resort, 62
 Zbraslav, 55
 Zeeland, characteristic Dutch costumes plentiful in, 12
 dress of natives of, 4
 (*cf.* Holland and Dutch)
 Zingari (gypsies), 93
 Zinnwald, 42
 Zlmzlina, Czech word for ice-cream, 56
 Zuider Zee, 12
 charms of the shores of, 13
 in Elizabethan days, 13
 notable battles in, 13
 proposed drainage and reclamation of, 13
 Zutphen, fascination of, 116-17
 historical associations of, 17
 Zveřnik-Belgrade road, 225